

LEGENDS AND  
LYRICS BY  
ADELAIDE  
PROCTER

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## LEGENDS AND LYRICS.

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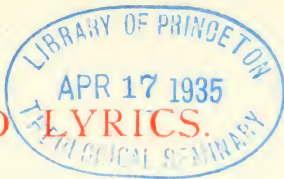


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*Adeline A. Porter*



# LEGENDS AND LYRICS.

A BOOK OF VERSES.

BY

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

*WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
CHARLES DICKENS.*



*FIRST SERIES.*

LONDON :

GEORGE BELL & SONS, YORK ST., COVENT GARDEN.

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1892.

CHISWICK PRESS :—C. WHITTINGHAM AND CO.,  
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DEDICATED  
TO  
MATILDA M. HAYS.

“ Our tokens of love are for the most part barbarous. Cold and lifeless, because they do not represent our life. The only gift is a portion of thyself. Therefore let the farmer give his corn ; the miner, a gem ; the sailor, coral and shells ; the painter, his picture ; and the poet, his poem.”—EMERSON'S ESSAYS.

A. A. P.

May, 1858.



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION.

By CHARLES DICKENS.

IN the spring of the year 1853, I observed, as Conductor of the Weekly Journal "Household Words," a short poem among the proffered contributions, very different, as I thought, from the shoal of verses perpetually setting through the office of such a Periodical, and possessing much more merit. Its authoress was quite unknown to me. She was one MISS MARY BERWICK, whom I had never heard of; and she was to be addressed by letter, if addressed at all, at a circulating library in the western district of London. Through this channel, Miss Berwick was informed that her poem was accepted, and

was invited to send another. She complied, and became a regular and frequent contributor. Many letters passed between the Journal and Miss Berwick, but Miss Berwick herself was never seen.

How we came gradually to establish, at the office of "Household Words," that we knew all about Miss Berwick, I have never discovered. But, we settled somehow, to our complete satisfaction, that she was governess in a family; that she went to Italy in that capacity, and returned; and that she had long been in the same family. We really knew nothing whatever of her, except that she was remarkably business-like, punctual, self-reliant, and reliable: so I suppose we insensibly invented the rest. For myself, my mother was not a more real personage to me, than Miss Berwick the governess became.

This went on until December, 1854, when the

Christmas Number, entitled "The Seven Poor Travellers," was sent to press. Happening to be going to dine that day with an old and dear friend, distinguished in literature as BARRY CORNWALL, I took with me an early proof of that Number, and remarked, as I laid it on the drawing-room table, that it contained a very pretty poem, written by a certain Miss Berwick. Next day brought me the disclosure that I had so spoken of the poem to the mother of its writer, in its writer's presence ; that I had no such correspondent in existence as Miss Berwick ; and that the name had been assumed by Barry Cornwall's eldest daughter, MISS ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

The anecdote I have here noted down, besides serving to explain why the parents of the late Miss Procter have looked to me for these poor words of remembrance of their lamented child, strikingly illustrates the honesty, independence,

and quiet dignity, of the lady's character. I had known her when she was very young ; I had been honoured with her father's friendship when I was myself a young aspirant ; and she had said at home, " If I send him, in my own name, verses that he does not honestly like, either it will be very painful to him to return them, or he will print them for papa's sake, and not for their own. So I have made up my mind to take my chance fairly with the unknown volunteers."

Perhaps it requires an Editor's experience of the profoundly unreasonable grounds on which he is often urged to accept unsuitable articles—such as having been to school with the writer's husband's brother-in-law, or having lent an alpenstock in Switzerland to the writer's wife's nephew, when that interesting stranger had broken his own—fully to appreciate the delicacy and the self-respect of this resolution.

Some verses by Miss Procter had been published in the "Book of Beauty," ten years before she became Miss Berwick. With the exception of two poems in the "Cornhill Magazine," two in "Good Words," and others in a little book called "A Chaplet of Verses" (issued in 1862 for the benefit of a Night Refuge), her published writings first appeared in "Household Words," or "All the Year Round." The present Edition contains the whole of her Legends and Lyrics, and originates in the great favour with which they have been received by the public.

Miss Procter was born in Bedford Square, London, on the 30th of October, 1825. Her love of poetry was conspicuous at so early an age, that I have before me a tiny album made of small note-paper, into which her favourite passages were copied for her by her mother's hand before she herself could write. It looks

as if she had carried it about, as another little girl might have carried a doll. She soon displayed a remarkable memory, and great quickness of apprehension. When she was quite a young child, she learnt with facility several of the problems of Euclid. As she grew older, she acquired the French, Italian, and German languages ; became a clever piano-forte player, and showed a true taste and sentiment in drawing. But, as soon as she had completely vanquished the difficulties of any one branch of study, it was her way to lose interest in it, and pass to another. While her mental resources were being trained, it was not at all suspected in her family that she had any gift of authorship, or any ambition to become a writer. Her father had no idea of her having ever attempted to turn a rhyme, until her first little poem saw the light in print.

When she attained to womanhood, she had

read an extraordinary number of books, and throughout her life she was always largely adding to the number. In 1853 she went to Turin and its neighbourhood, on a visit to her aunt, a Roman Catholic lady. As Miss Procter had herself professed the Roman Catholic Faith two years before, she entered with the greater ardour on the study of the Piedmontese dialect, and the observation of the habits and manners of the peasantry. In the former, she soon became a proficient. On the latter head, I extract from her familiar letters written home to England at the time, two pleasant pieces of description.

#### A BETROTHAL.

“We have been to a ball, of which I must give you a description. Last Tuesday we had just

done dinner at about seven, and stepped out into the balcony to look at the remains of the sunset behind the mountains, when we heard very distinctly a band of music, which rather excited my astonishment, as a solitary organ is the utmost that toils up here. I went out of the room for a few minutes, and, on my returning, Emily said, 'Oh ! That band is playing at the farmer's near here. The daughter is *fiancée* to-day, and they have a ball.' I said, 'I wish I was going !' 'Well,' replied she, 'the farmer's wife did call to invite us.' 'Then, I shall certainly go,' I exclaimed. I applied to Madame B., who said she would like it very much, and we had better go, children and all. Some of the servants were already gone. We rushed away to put on some shawls, and put off any shred of black we might have about us (as the people would have been quite annoyed if we had appeared on such an occasion with any black),

and we started. When we reached the farmer's, which is a stone's throw above our house, we were received with great enthusiasm ; the only drawback being, that no one spoke French, and we did not yet speak Piedmontese. We were placed on a bench against the wall, and the people went on dancing. The room was a large whitewashed kitchen (I suppose), with several large pictures in black frames, and very smoky. I distinguished the Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, and the others appeared equally lively and appropriate subjects. Whether they were Old Masters or not, and if so, by whom, I could not ascertain. The band were seated opposite us. Five men, with wind instruments, part of the band of the National Guard, to which the farmer's sons belong. They played really admirably, and I began to be afraid that some idea of our dignity would prevent my getting a partner ; so, by Madame B.'s advice, I went up

to the bride, and offered to dance with her. Such a handsome young woman! Like one of Uwins's pictures. Very dark, with a quantity of black hair, and on an immense scale. The children were already dancing, as well as the maids. After we came to an end of our dance, which was what they call a Polka-Mazourka, I saw the bride trying to screw up the courage of her *fiancé* to ask me to dance, which after a little hesitation he did. And admirably he danced, as indeed they all did—in excellent time, and with a little more spirit than one sees in a ball-room. In fact, they were very like one's ordinary partners, except that they wore ear-rings and were in their shirt-sleeves, and truth compels me to state that they decidedly smelt of garlic. Some of them had been smoking, but threw away their cigars when we came in. The only thing that did not look cheerful was, that the room was only lighted by two or three

oil-lamps, and that there seemed to be no preparation for refreshments. Madame B., seeing this, whispered to her maid, who disengaged herself from her partner, and ran off to the house; she and the kitchenmaid presently returning with a large tray covered with all kinds of cakes (of which we are great consumers and always have a stock), and a large hamper full of bottles of wine, with coffee and sugar. This seemed all very acceptable. The *fiancée* was requested to distribute the eatables, and a bucket of water being produced to wash the glasses in, the wine disappeared very quickly—as fast as they could open the bottles. But, elated I suppose by this, the floor was sprinkled with water, and the musicians played a Monferrino, which is a Piedmontese dance. Madame B. danced with the farmer's son, and Emily with another distinguished member of the company. It was very fatiguing—something like a Scotch

reel. My partner was a little man, like Perrot, and very proud of his dancing. He cut in the air and twisted about, until I was out of breath, though my attempts to imitate him were feeble in the extreme. At last, after seven or eight dances, I was obliged to sit down. We stayed till nine, and I was so dead beat with the heat that I could hardly crawl about the house, and in an agony with the cramp, it is so long since I have danced."

### A MARRIAGE.

"The wedding of the farmer's daughter has taken place. We had hoped it would have been in the little chapel of our house, but it seems some special permission was necessary, and they applied for it too late. They all said, 'This is the Constitution. There would have

been no difficulty before!’ the lower classes making the poor Constitution the scape-goat for everything they don’t like. So as it was impossible for us to climb up to the church where the wedding was to be, we contented ourselves with seeing the procession pass. It was not a very large one, for, it requiring some activity to go up, all the old people remained at home. It is not the etiquette for the bride’s mother to go, and no unmarried woman can go to a wedding—I suppose for fear of its making her discontented with her own position. The procession stopped at our door, for the bride to receive our congratulations. She was dressed in a shot silk, with a yellow handkerchief, and rows of a large gold chain. In the afternoon they sent to request us to go there. On our arrival we found them dancing out of doors, and a most melancholy affair it was. All the bride’s sisters were not to be recognized, they had cried

so. The mother sat in the house, and could not appear. And the bride was sobbing so, she could hardly stand! The most melancholy spectacle of all to my mind, was, that the bridegroom was decidedly tipsy. He seemed rather affronted at all the distress. We danced a Monferrino; I with the bridegroom; and the bride crying the whole time. The company did their utmost to enliven her by firing pistols, but without success, and at last they began a series of yells, which reminded me of a set of savages. But even this delicate method of consolation failed, and the wishing good-bye began. It was altogether so melancholy an affair that Madame B. dropped a few tears, and I was very near it, particularly when the poor mother came out to see the last of her daughter, who was finally dragged off between her brother and uncle, with a last explosion of pistols. As she lives quite near, makes an excellent match, and is one of

nine children, it really was a most desirable marriage, in spite of all the show of distress. Albert was so discomfited by it, that he forgot to kiss the bride as he had intended to do, and therefore went to call upon her yesterday, and found her very smiling in her new house, and supplied the omission. The cook came home from the wedding, declaring she was cured of any wish to marry—but I would not recommend any man to act upon that threat and make her an offer. In a couple of days we had some rolls of the bride's first baking, which they call Madonnas. The musicians, it seems, were in the same state as the bridegroom, for, in escorting her home, they all fell down in the mud. My wrath against the bridegroom is somewhat calmed by finding that it is considered bad luck if he does not get tipsy at his wedding."

Those readers of Miss Procter's poems who

should suppose from their tone that her mind was of a gloomy or despondent cast, would be curiously mistaken. She was exceedingly humorous, and had a great delight in humour. Cheerfulness was habitual with her, she was very ready at a sally or a reply, and in her laugh (as I remember well) there was an unusual vivacity, enjoyment, and sense of drollery. She was perfectly unconstrained and unaffected : as modestly silent about her productions, as she was generous with their pecuniary results. She was a friend who inspired the strongest attachments ; she was a finely sympathetic woman, with a great accordant heart and a sterling noble nature. No claim can be set up for her, thank God, to the possession of any of the conventional poetical qualities. She never by any means held the opinion that she was among the greatest of human beings ; she never suspected the existence of a conspiracy on the part of

mankind against her; she never recognized in her best friends, her worst enemies; she never cultivated the luxury of being misunderstood and unappreciated; she would far rather have died without seeing a line of her composition in print, than that I should have maundered about her, here, as "the Poet," or "the Poetess."

With the recollection of Miss Procter as a mere child and as a woman, fresh upon me, it is natural that I should linger on my way to the close of this brief record, avoiding its end. But, even as the close came upon her, so must it come here.

Always impelled by an intense conviction that her life must not be dreamed away, and that her indulgence in her favourite pursuits must be balanced by action in the real world around her, she was indefatigable in her endeavours to do some good. Naturally enthusiastic, and conscientiously impressed with a deep sense of her

Christian duty to her neighbour, she devoted herself to a variety of benevolent objects. Now, it was the visitation of the sick, that had possession of her ; now, it was the sheltering of the houseless ; now, it was the elementary teaching of the densely ignorant ; now, it was the raising up of those who had wandered and got trodden under foot ; now, it was the wider employment of her own sex in the general business of life ; now, it was all these things at once. Perfectly unselfish, swift to sympathize and eager to relieve, she wrought at such designs with a flushed earnestness that disregarded season, weather, time of day or night, food, rest. Under such a hurry of the spirits, and such incessant occupation, the strongest constitution will commonly go down. Hers, neither of the strongest nor the weakest, yielded to the burden, and began to sink.

To have saved her life, then, by taking action

on the warning that shone in her eyes and sounded in her voice, would have been impossible, without changing her nature. As long as the power of moving about in the old way was left to her, she must exercise it, or be killed by the restraint. And so the time came when she could move about no longer, and took to her bed.

All the restlessness gone then, and all the sweet patience of her natural disposition purified by the resignation of her soul, she lay upon her bed through the whole round of changes of the seasons. She lay upon her bed through fifteen months. In all that time, her old cheerfulness never quitted her. In all that time, not an impatient or a querulous minute can be remembered.

At length, at midnight on the 2nd of February, 1864, she turned down a leaf of a little book she was reading, and shut it up.

The ministering hand that had copied the

verses into the tiny album was soon around her neck, and she quietly asked, as the clock was on the stroke of one :

“ Do you think I am dying, mamma ? ”

“ I think you are very, very ill to-night, my dear.”

“ Send for my sister. My feet are so cold. Lift me up ! ”

Her sister entering as they raised her, she said : “ It has come at last ! ” And with a bright and happy smile, looked upward, and departed.

Well had she written :

Why shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel, Death,  
Who waits thee at the portals of the skies,  
Ready to kiss away thy struggling breath,  
Ready with gentle hand to close thine eyes ?

Oh what were life, if life were all ? Thine eyes  
Are blinded by their tears, or thou wouldst see  
Thy treasures wait thee in the far-off skies,  
And Death, thy friend, will give them all to thee.

## THE ANGEL'S STORY.

THROUGH the blue and frosty heavens,  
Christmas stars were shining bright ;  
Glistening lamps throughout the City  
Almost matched their gleaming light ;  
While the winter snow was lying,  
And the winter winds were sighing,  
Long ago, one Christmas night.

While, from every tower and steeple,  
Pealing bells were sounding clear,  
(Never with such tones of gladness,  
Save when Christmas time is near,)  
Many a one that night was merry  
Who had toiled through all the year.

That night saw old wrongs forgiven,  
Friends, long parted, reconciled ;  
Voices all unused to laughter,  
Mournful eyes that rarely smiled,  
Trembling hearts that feared the morrow,  
From their anxious thoughts beguiled.

Rich and poor felt love and blessing  
From the gracious season fall ;  
Joy and plenty in the cottage,  
Peace and feasting in the hall ;  
And the voices of the children  
Ringing clear above it all !

Yet one house was dim and darkened :  
Gloom, and sickness, and despair,  
Dwelling in the gilded chambers,  
Creeping up the marble stair,  
Even stilled the voice of mourning—  
For a child lay dying there.

Silken curtains fell around him,  
Velvet carpets hushed the tread,  
Many costly toys were lying,  
All unheeded, by his bed ;  
And his tangled golden ringlets  
Were on downy pillows spread.

The skill of all that mighty City  
To save one little life was vain ;  
One little thread from being broken,  
One fatal word from being spoken ;  
Nay, his very mother's pain,

And the mighty love within her,  
    Could not give him health again.

So she knelt there still beside him,  
    She alone with strength to smile,  
Promising that he should suffer  
    No more in a little while,  
Murmuring tender song and story  
    Weary hours to beguile.

Suddenly an unseen Presence  
    Checked those constant moaning cries,  
Stilled the little heart's quick fluttering,  
    Raised those blue and wondering eyes,  
Fixed on some mysterious vision,  
    With a startled sweet surprise.

For a radiant angel hovered,  
    Smiling, o'er the little bed ;  
White his raiment, from his shoulders  
    Snowy dove-like pinions spread,  
And a starlike light was shining  
    In a Glory round his head.

While, with tender love, the angel,  
    Leaning o'er the little nest,

In his arms the sick child folding,  
Laid him gently on his breast,  
Sobs and wailings told the mother  
That her darling was at rest.

So the angel, slowly rising,  
Spread his wings ; and, through the air,  
Bore the child, and while he held him  
To his heart with loving care,  
Placed a branch of crimson roses  
Tenderly beside him there.

While the child, thus clinging, floated  
Towards the mansions of the Blest,  
Gazing from his shining guardian  
To the flowers upon his breast,  
Thus the angel spake, still smiling  
On the little heavenly guest :

“ Know, dear little one, that Heaven  
Does no earthly thing disdain,  
Man's poor joys find there an echo  
Just as surely as his pain ;  
Love, on earth so feebly striving,  
Lives divine in Heaven again !

“Once in that great town below us,  
In a poor and narrow street,  
Dwelt a little sickly orphan ;  
Gentle aid, or pity sweet,  
Never in life's rugged pathway  
Guided his poor tottering feet.

“All the striving anxious forethought  
That should only come with age,  
Weighed upon his baby spirit,  
Showed him soon life's sternest page ;  
Grim Want was his nurse, and Sorrow  
Was his only heritage.

“All too weak for childish pastimes,  
Drearly the hours sped ;  
On his hands so small and trembling  
Leaning his poor aching head,  
Or, through dark and painful hours,  
Lying sleepless on his bed.

“Dreaming strange and longing fancies  
Of cool forests far away ;  
And of rosy, happy children,  
Laughing merrily at play,

Coming home through green lanes, bearing  
Trailing boughs of blooming May.

“ Scarce a glimpse of azure heaven  
Gleamed above that narrow street,  
And the sultry air of Summer  
(That you’ call so warm and sweet)  
Fevered the poor Orphan, dwelling  
In the crowded alley’s heat.

“ One bright day, with feeble footsteps  
Slowly forth he tried to crawl,  
Through the crowded city’s pathways,  
Till he reached a garden-wall ;  
Where ’mid princely halls and mansions  
Stood the lordliest of all.

“ There were trees with giant branches,  
Velvet glades where shadows hide ;  
There were sparkling fountains glancing,  
Flowers, which in luxuriant pride  
Even wafted breaths of perfume  
To the child who stood outside.

“ He against the gate of iron  
Pressed his wan and wistful face,

Gazing with an awe-struck pleasure  
At the glories of the place ;  
Never had his brightest day-dream  
Shone with half such wondrous grace.

“ You were playing in that garden,  
Throwing blossoms in the air,  
Laughing when the petals floated  
Downwards on your golden hair  
And the fond eyes watching o’er you,  
And the splendour spread before you,  
Told a House’s Hope was there.

“ When your servants, tired of seeing  
Such a face of want and woe,  
Turning to the ragged Orphan,  
Gave him coin, and bade him go,  
Down his cheeks so thin and wasted,  
Bitter tears began to flow.

“ But that look of childish sorrow  
On your tender child-heart fell,  
And you plucked the reddest roses  
From the tree you loved so well,  
Passed them through the stern cold grating,  
Gently bidding him ‘ Farewell ! ’

“Dazzled by the fragrant treasure  
And the gentle voice he heard,  
In the poor forlorn boy's spirit,  
Joy, the sleeping Seraph, stirred ;  
In his hand he took the flowers,  
In his heart the loving word.

“So he crept to his poor garret ;  
Poor no more, but rich and bright,  
For the holy dreams of childhood—  
Love, and Rest, and Hope, and Light—  
Floated round the Orphan's pillow  
Through the starry summer night.

“Day dawned, yet the visions lasted ;  
All too weak to rise he lay ;  
Did he dream that none spake harshly—  
All were strangely kind that day ?  
Surely then his treasured roses  
Must have charmed all ills away.

“And he smiled, though they were fading ;  
One by one their leaves were shed ;  
‘Such bright things could never perish,  
They would bloom again,’ he said.

When the next day's sun had risen  
Child and flowers both were dead.

“ Know, dear little one ! our Father  
Will no gentle deed disdain ;  
Love on the cold earth beginning  
Lives divine in Heaven again,  
While the angel hearts that beat there  
Still all tender thoughts retain.”

So the angel ceased, and gently  
O'er his little burthen leant ;  
While the child gazed from the shining,  
Loving eyes that o'er him bent,  
To the blooming roses by him,  
Wondering what that mystery meant.

Thus the radiant angel answered,  
And with tender meaning smiled :  
“ Ere your childlike, loving spirit,  
Sin and the hard world defiled,  
God has given me leave to seek you—  
I was once that little child ! ”

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In the churchyard of that city  
    Rose a tomb of marble rare,  
Decked, as soon as Spring awakened,  
    With her buds and blossoms fair—  
And a humble grave beside it—  
    No one knew who rested there.

## ECHOES.

STILL the angel stars are shining,  
    Still the rippling waters flow,  
But the angel-voice is silent  
    That I heard so long ago.  
Hark ! the echoes murmur low,  
                    Long ago !

Still the wood is dim and lonely,  
    Still the plashing fountains play,  
But the past and all its beauty,  
    Whither has it fled away ?  
Hark ! the mournful echoes say,  
                    Fled away !

Still the bird of night complaineth,  
    (Now, indeed, her song is pain,)  
Visions of my happy hours,  
    Do I call and call in vain ?  
Hark ! the echoes cry again,  
                    All in vain !

Cease, oh echoes, mournful echoes !  
    Once I loved your voices well ;  
Now my heart is sick and weary—  
    Days of old, a long farewell !  
Hark ! the echoes sad and dreary  
                    Cry farewell, farewell !

*A FALSE GENIUS.*

I SEE a Spirit by thy side,  
Purple-winged and eagle-eyed,  
Looking like a Heavenly guide.

Though he seem so bright and fair,  
Ere thou trust his proffered care,  
Pause a little, and beware !

If he bid thee dwell apart,  
Tending some ideal smart  
In a sick and coward heart ;

In self-worship wrapped alone,  
Dreaming thy poor griefs are grown  
More than other men have known ;

Dwelling in some cloudy sphere,  
Though God's work is waiting here,  
And God deigneth to be near ;

If his torch's crimson glare  
Show thee evil everywhere,  
Tainting all the wholesome air ;

While with strange distorted choice,  
Still disdaining to rejoice,  
Thou *wilt* hear a wailing voice ;

If a simple, humble heart,  
Seem to thee a meaner part,  
Than thy noblest aim and art ;

If he bid thee bow before  
Crownèd Mind and nothing more,  
The great idol men adore ;

And with starry veil enfold  
Sin, the trailing serpent old,  
Till his scales shine out like gold ;

Though his words seem true and wise,  
Soul, I say to thee—Arise,  
He is a Demon in disguise !

*MY PICTURE.*

STAND this way—more near the window—  
By my desk—you see the light  
Falling on my picture better—  
Thus I see it while I write !

Who the head may be I know not,  
But it has a student air ;  
With a look half sad, half stately,  
Grave sweet eyes and flowing hair.

Little care I who the painter,  
How obscure a name he bore ;  
Nor, when some have named Velasquez,  
Did I value it the more.

As it is, I would not give it  
For the rarest piece of art ;  
It has dwelt with me, and listened  
To the secrets of my heart.

Many a time, when to my garret,  
Weary, I returned at night,  
It has seemed to look a welcome  
That has made my poor room bright.

Many a time, when ill and sleepless,  
I have watched the quivering gleam  
Of my lamp upon that picture,  
Till it faded in my dream.

When dark days have come, and friendship  
Worthless seemed, and life in vain,  
That bright friendly smile has sent me  
Boldly to my task again.

Sometimes when hard need has pressed me  
To bow down where I despise,  
I have read stern words of counsel  
In those sad reproachful eyes.

Nothing that my brain imagined,  
Or my weary hand has wrought,  
But it watched the dim Idea  
Spring forth into armèd Thought.

It has smiled on my successes,  
Raised me when my hopes were low,  
And by turns has looked upon me  
With all the loving eyes I know.

Do you wonder that my picture  
Has become so like a friend?—  
It has seen my life's beginnings,  
It shall stay and cheer the end !

## JUDGE NOT.

JUDGE not ; the workings of his brain  
And of his heart thou canst not see ;  
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,  
In God's pure light may only be  
A scar, brought from some well-won field,  
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

The look, the air, that frets thy sight,  
    May be a token, that below  
The soul has closed in deadly fight  
    With some infernal fiery foe,  
Whose glance would scorch thy smiling grace,  
And cast thee shuddering on thy face !

The fall thou darest to despise—  
    May be the angel's slackened hand  
Has suffered it, that he may rise  
    And take a firmer, surer stand ;  
Or, trusting less to earthly things,  
May henceforth learn to use his wings.

And judge none lost ; but wait, and see,  
    With hopeful pity, not disdain ;  
The depth of the abyss may be  
    The measure of the height of pain  
And love and glory that may raise  
This soul to God in after days !

## FRIEND SORROW.

Do not cheat thy Heart and tell her,  
 "Grief will pass away,  
 Hope for fairer times in future,  
 And forget to-day."—  
 Tell her, if you will, that sorrow  
 Need not come in vain ;  
 Tell her that the lesson taught her  
 Far outweighs the pain.

Cheat her not with the old comfort,  
 "Soon she will forget"—  
 Bitter truth, alas—but matter  
 Rather for regret ;  
 Bid her not "Seek other pleasures,  
 Turn to other things :"—  
 Rather nurse her caged sorrow  
 'Till the captive sings.

Rather bid her go forth bravely,  
 And the stranger greet ;

Not as foe, with spear and buckler,  
But as dear friends meet ;  
Bid her with a strong clasp hold her,  
By her dusky wings—  
Listening for the murmured blessing  
Sorrow always brings.

### ONE BY ONE.

ONE by one the sands are flowing,  
One by one the moments fall ;  
Some are coming, some are going ;  
Do not strive to grasp them all.

One by one thy duties wait thee,  
Let thy whole strength go to each,  
Let no future dreams elate thee,  
Learn thou first what these can teach.

One by one (bright gifts from Heaven)  
Joys are sent thee here below ;  
Take them readily when given,  
Ready too to let them go.

One by one thy griefs shall meet thee,  
Do not fear an armèd band ;  
One will fade as others greet thee ;  
Shadows passing through the land.

Do not look at life's long sorrow ;  
See how small each moment's pain ;  
God will help thee for to-morrow,  
So each day begin again.

Every hour that fleets so slowly  
Has its task to do or bear ;  
Luminous the crown, and holy,  
When each gem is set with care.

Do not linger with regretting,  
Or for passing hours despond ;  
Nor, the daily toil forgetting,  
Look too eagerly beyond.

Hours are golden links, God's token,  
Reaching Heaven ; but one by one  
Take them, lest the chain be broken  
Ere the pilgrimage be done.

## TRUE HONOURS.

Is my darling tired already,  
Tired of her day of play?  
Draw your little stool beside me,  
Smooth this tangled hair away.  
Can she put the logs together,  
Till they make a cheerful blaze?  
Shall her blind old Uncle tell her  
Something of his youthful days?

Hark! The wind among the cedars  
Waves their white arms to and fro;  
I remember how I watched them  
Sixty Christmas Days ago:  
Then I dreamt a glorious vision  
Of great deeds to crown each year—  
Sixty Christmas Days have found me  
Useless, helpless, blind—and here!

Yes, I feel my darling stealing  
Warm soft fingers into mine—  
Shall I tell her what I fancied  
In that strange old dream of mine?  
I was kneeling by the window,  
Reading how a noble band,  
With the red cross on their breast-plates,  
Went to gain the Holy Land.

While with eager eyes of wonder  
Over the dark page I bent,  
Slowly twilight shadows gathered  
Till the letters came and went ;  
Slowly, till the night was round me ;  
Then my heart beat loud and fast,  
For I felt before I saw it  
That a spirit near me passed.

Then I raised my eyes, and shining  
Where the moon's first ray was bright,  
Stood a wingèd Angel-warrior  
Clothed and panoplied in light :  
So, with Heaven's love upon him,  
Stern in calm and resolute will,  
Looked St. Michael—does the picture  
Hang in the old cloister still?

Threefold were the dreams of honour  
That absorbed my heart and brain ;  
Threefold crowns the Angel promised,  
Each one to be bought by pain :  
While he spoke, a threefold blessing  
Fell upon my soul like rain.  
HELPER OF THE POOR AND SUFFERING ;  
VICTOR IN A GLORIOUS STRIFE :  
SINGER OF A NOBLE POEM :  
Such the honours of my life.

Ah, that dream ! Long years that gave me  
Joy and grief as real things  
Never touched the tender memory  
Sweet and solemn that it brings—  
Never quite effaced the feeling  
Of those white and shadowing wings.

Do those blue eyes open wider ?  
Does my faith too foolish seem ?  
Yes, my darling, years have taught me  
It was nothing but a dream.  
Soon, too soon, the bitter knowledge  
Of a fearful trial rose,  
Rose to crush my heart, and sternly  
Bade my young ambition close.

More and more my eyes were clouded,  
Till at last God's glorious light  
Passed away from me for ever,  
And I lived and live in night.  
Dear, I will not dim your pleasure,  
Christmas should be only gay—  
In my night the stars have risen,  
And I wait the dawn of day.

Spite of all I could be happy ;  
For my brothers' tender care  
In their boyish pastimes ever  
Made me take, or feel a share.  
Philip, even then so thoughtful,  
Max so noble, brave and tall,  
And your father, little Godfrey,  
The most loving of them all.

Philip reasoned down my sorrow,  
Max would laugh my gloom away,  
Godfrey's little arms put round me,  
Helped me through my dreariest day ;  
While the promise of my Angel,  
Like a star, now bright, now pale,  
Hung in blackest night above me,  
And I felt it could not fail.

Years passed on, my brothers left me,  
Each went out to take his share  
In the struggle of life ; my portion  
Was a humble one—to bear.  
Here I dwelt, and learnt to wander  
Through the woods and fields alone,  
Every cottage in the village  
Had a corner called my own.

Old and young, all brought their troubles,  
Great or small, for me to hear ;  
I have often blessed my sorrow  
That drew others' grief so near.  
Ah, the people needed helping—  
Needed love—for Love and Heaven  
Are the only gifts not bartered,  
They alone are freely given)—

And I gave it. Philip's bounty,  
(We were orphans, dear,) made toil  
Prosper, and want never fastened  
On the tenants of the soil.  
Philip's name (Oh, how I gloried,  
He so young, to see it rise !)  
Soon grew noted among statesmen  
As a patriot true and wise.

And his people all felt honoured  
To be ruled by such a name ;  
I was proud too that they loved me ;  
Through their pride in him it came.  
He had gained what I had longed for,  
I meanwhile grew glad and gay,  
'Mid his people, to be serving  
Him and them, in some poor way.

How his noble earnest speeches,  
With untiring fervour came ;  
HELPER OF THE POOR AND SUFFERING ;  
Truly he deserved the name !  
Had my Angel's promise failed me ?  
Had that word of hope grown dim ?  
Why, my Philip had fulfilled it,  
And I loved it best in him !

Max meanwhile—ah, you, my darling,  
Can his loving words recall—  
'Mid the bravest and the noblest,  
Braver, nobler, than them all.  
How I loved him ! how my heart thrilled  
When his sword clanked by his side,  
When I touched his gold embroidery,  
Almost *saw* him in his pride !

So we parted ; he all eager  
To uphold the name he bore,  
Leaving in my charge—he loved me—  
Some one whom he loved still more :  
I must tend this gentle flower,  
I must speak to her of him,  
For he feared—Love still is fearful—  
That his memory might grow dim.

I must guard her from all sorrow,  
I must play a brother's part,  
Shield all grief and trial from her,  
If it need be, with my heart.  
Years passed, and his name grew famous ;  
We were proud, both she and I ;  
And we lived upon his letters,  
While the slow days fled by.

Then at last—you know the story,  
How a fearful rumour spread,  
Till all hope had slowly faded,  
And we heard that he was dead.  
Dead ! Oh, those were bitter hours ;  
Yet within my soul there dwelt  
A warning, and while others mourned him,  
Something like a hope I felt.

His was no weak life as mine was,  
But a life, so full and strong—  
No, I could not think he perished  
Nameless, 'mid a conquered throng.  
How she drooped ! Years passed ; no tidings  
Came, and yet that little flame  
Of strange hope within my spirit  
Still burnt on, and lived the same.

Ah ! my child, our hearts will fail us,  
When to us they strongest seem :  
I can look back on those hours  
As a fearful, evil dream.  
She had long despaired ; what wonder  
That her heart had turned to mine ?  
Earthly loves are deep and tender,  
Not eternal and divine !

Can I say how bright a future  
Rose before my soul that day ?  
Oh, so strange, so sweet, so tender—  
And I had to turn away.  
Hard and terrible the struggle,  
For the pain not mine alone ;  
I called back my Brother's spirit,  
And I bade him claim his own.

Told her—now I dared to do it—  
That I felt the day would rise  
When he would return to gladden  
My weak heart and her bright eyes.  
And I pleaded—pleaded sternly—  
In his name, and for his sake :  
Now, I can speak calmly of it,  
Then, I thought my heart would break.

Soon—ah, Love had not deceived me,  
(Love's true instincts never err,)  
Wounded, weak, escaped from prison,  
He returned to me ; to her.  
I could thank God that bright morning,  
When I felt my Brother's gaze,  
That my heart was true and loyal,  
As in our old boyish days.

Bought by wounds and deeds of daring,  
Honours he had brought away ;  
Glory crowned his name—my Brother's ;  
Mine too !—we were one that day.  
Since the crown on him had fallen,  
“VICTOR IN A NOBLE STRIFE,”  
I could live and die contented  
With my poor ignoble life.

Well, my darling, almost weary  
Of my story? Wait awhile ;  
For the rest is only joyful ;  
I can tell it with a smile.  
One bright promise still was left me,  
Wound so close about my soul,  
That, as one by one had failed me,  
This dream now absorbed the whole.

“SINGER OF A NOBLE POEM,”--  
Ah, my darling, few and rare  
Burn the glorious names of Poets,  
Like stars in the purple air.  
That too, and I glory in it,  
That great gift my Godfrey won ;  
I have my dear share of honour,  
Gained by that belovèd one.

One day shall my darling read it ;  
Now she cannot understand  
All the noble thoughts, that lighten  
Though the genius of the land.  
I am proud to be his brother,  
Proud to think that hope was true ;  
Though I longed and strove so vainly,  
What I failed in, he could do.

I was long before I knew it,  
Longer ere I felt it so ;  
Then I strung my rhymes together  
Only for the poor and low.  
And, it pleases me to know it,  
(For I loved them well indeed,)  
They care for 'my humble verses,  
Fitted for their humble need.

And, it cheers my heart to hear it,  
Where the far-off settlers roam,  
My poor words are sung and cherished,  
Just because they speak of Home.  
And the little children sing them,  
(That, I think, has pleased me best,)  
Often, too, the dying love them,  
For they tell of Heaven and rest.

So my last vain dream has faded ;  
(Such as I to think of fame !)  
Yet I will not say it failed me,  
For it crowned my Godfrey's name.  
No ; my Angel did not cheat me,  
For my long life *has* been blest ;  
He did give me Love and Sorrow,  
He will bring me Light and Rest.

## A WOMAN'S QUESTION.

BEFORE I trust my Fate to thee,  
 Or place my hand in thine,  
 Before I let thy Future give  
 Colour and form to mine,  
 Before I peril all for thee, question thy soul to-  
 night for me.

I break all slighter bonds, nor feel  
 A shadow of regret :  
 Is there one link within the Past,  
 That holds thy spirit yet ?  
 Or is thy Faith as clear and free as that which I  
 can pledge to thee ?

Does there within thy dimmest dreams  
 A possible future shine,  
 Wherein thy life could henceforth breathe,  
 Untouched, unshared by mine ?  
 If so, at any pain or cost, oh, tell me before all  
 is lost.

Look deeper still. If thou canst feel  
    Within thy inmost soul,  
That thou hast kept a portion back,  
    While I have staked the whole ;  
Let no false pity spare the blow, but in true  
    mercy tell me so.

Is there within thy heart a need  
    That mine cannot fulfil ?  
One chord that any other hand  
    Could better wake or still ?  
Speak now—lest at some future day my whole  
    life wither and decay.

Lives there within thy nature hid  
    The demon-spirit Change,  
Shedding a passing glory still  
    On all things new and strange ?—  
It may not be thy fault alone—but shield my  
    heart against thy own.

Couldst thou withdraw thy hand one day  
    And answer to my claim,  
That Fate, and that to-day's mistake,  
    Not thou—had been to blame ?  
Some soothe their conscience thus : but thou,  
    wilt surely warn and save me now.

Nay, answer *not*—I dare not hear,  
The words would come too late ;  
Yet I would spare thee all remorse,  
So, comfort thee, my Fate—  
Whatever on my heart may fall—remember, I  
*would* risk it all !

## THE THREE RULERS.

I SAW a Ruler take his stand  
And trample on a mighty land :  
The People crouched before his beck,  
His iron heel was on their neck,  
His name shone bright through blood and pain,  
His sword flashed back their praise again.

I saw another Ruler rise—  
His words were noble, good, and wise ;  
With the calm sceptre of his pen  
He ruled the minds and thoughts of men :  
Some scoffed, some praised—while many heard,  
Only a few obeyed his word.

Another Ruler then I saw—  
Love and sweet Pity were his law :  
The greatest and the least had part  
(Yet most the unhappy) in his heart—  
The People, in a mighty band,  
Rose up, and drove him from the land !

### A DEAD PAST.

SPARE her at least : look, you have taken from  
me  
The Present, and I murmur not, nor moan ;  
The Future too, with all her glorious promise ;  
But do not leave me utterly alone.

Spare me the Past—for, see, she cannot harm  
you,  
She lies so white and cold, wrapped in her  
shroud ;  
All, all my own ! and, trust me, I will hide her  
Within my soul, nor speak to her aloud.

I folded her soft hands upon her bosom,  
And strewed my flowers upon her—*they* still  
live—

Sometimes I like to kiss her closed white eyelids,  
And think of all the joy she used to give.

Cruel indeed it were to take her from me ;  
She sleeps, she will not wake—no fear—again :  
And so I laid her, such a gentle burthen,  
Quietly on my heart to still its pain.

I do not think that any smiling Present,  
Any vague Future, spite of all her charms,  
Could ever rival her. You know you laid her,  
Long years ago, then living, in my arms.

Leave her at least—while my tears fall upon her,  
I dream she smiles, just as she did of yore ;  
As dear as ever to me—nay, it may be,  
Even dearer still—since I have nothing more.

## A DOUBTING HEART.

WHERE are the swallows fled?

Frozen and dead,

Perchance upon some bleak and stormy shore.

Oh doubting heart !

Far over purple seas,

They wait, in sunny ease,

The balmy southern breeze,

To bring them to their northern homes once  
more.

Why must the flowers die?

Prisoned they lie

In the cold tomb, heedless of tears or rain.

Oh doubting heart !

They only sleep below

The soft white ermine snow,

While winter winds shall blow,

To breathe and smile upon you soon again.

The sun has hid its rays  
    These many days ;  
Will dreary hours never leave the earth ?  
    O doubting heart !  
The stormy clouds on high  
Veil the same sunny sky,  
    That soon (for spring is nigh)  
Shall wake the summer into golden mirth.

Fair hope is dead, and light  
    Is quenched in night.  
What sound can break the silence of despair ?  
    O doubting heart !  
Thy sky is overcast,  
Yet stars shall rise at last,  
Brighter for darkness past,  
And angels' silver voices stir the air.

*A STUDENT.*

OVER an ancient scroll I bent,  
Steeping my soul in wise content,  
Nor paused a moment, save to chide  
A low voice whispering at my side.

I wove beneath the stars' pale shine  
A dream, half human, half divine ;  
And shook off (not to break the charm)  
A little hand laid on my arm.

I read ; until my heart would glow  
With the great deeds of long ago ;  
Nor heard, while with those mighty dead,  
Pass to and fro a faltering tread.

On the old theme I pondered long—  
The struggle between right and wrong ;  
I could not check such visions high,  
To soothe a little quivering sigh.

I tried to solve the problem—Life  
Dreaming of that mysterious strife,  
How could I leave such reasonings wise,  
To answer two blue pleading eyes ?

I strove how best to give, and when,  
My blood to save my fellow-men—  
How could I turn aside, to look  
At snowdrops laid upon my book ?

Now Time has fled—the world is strange,  
Something there is of pain and change ;

My books lie closed upon the shelf ;  
I miss the old heart in myself.

I miss the sunbeams in my room—  
It was not always wrapped in gloom :  
I miss my dreams—they fade so fast,  
Or flit into some trivial past.

The great stream of the world goes by ;  
None care, or heed, or question, why  
I, the lone student, cannot raise  
My voice or hand as in old days.

No echo seems to wake again  
My heart to anything but pain,  
Save when a dream of twilight brings  
The fluttering of an angel's wings !

### A KNIGHT ERRANT.

THOUGH he lived and died among us,  
Yet his name may be enrolled  
With the knights whose deeds of daring  
Ancient chronicles have told.

Still a stripling, he encountered  
Poverty, and struggled long,  
Gathering force from every effort,  
Till he knew his arm was strong.

Then his heart and life he offered  
To his radiant mistress—Truth ;  
Never thought, or dream, or faltering,  
Marred the promise of his youth.

So he rode forth to defend her,  
And her peerless worth proclaim ;  
Challenging each recreant doubter  
Who aspersed her spotless name.

First upon his path stood Ignorance,  
Hideous in his brutal might ;  
Hard the blows and long the battle  
Ere the monster took to flight.

Then, with light and fearless spirit,  
Prejudice he dared to brave ;  
Hunting back the lying craven  
To her black sulphureous cave.

Followed by his servile minions,  
Custom, the old Giant, rose ;

Yet he, too, at last was conquered  
By the good Knight's weighty blows.

Then he turned, and, flushed with victory,  
Struck upon the brazen shield  
Of the world's great king, Opinion,  
And defied him to the field.

Once again he rose a conqueror,  
And, though wounded in the fight,  
With a dying smile of triumph  
Saw that Truth had gained her right.

On his failing ear re-echoing  
Came the shouting round her throne ;  
Little cared he that no future  
With her name would link his own.

Spent with many a hard-fought battle,  
Slowly ebb'd his life away,  
And the crowd that flocked to greet her  
Trampled on him where he lay.

Gathering all his strength, he saw her  
Crowned and reigning in her pride :  
Looked his last upon her beauty,  
Raised his eyes to God, and died.

## LINGER, OH, GENTLE TIME.

LINGER, oh, gentle Time.

Linger, oh, radiant grace of bright To-day !

Let not the hours' chime

Call thee away,

But linger near me still with fond delay.

Linger, for thou art mine !

What dearer treasures can the future hold ?

What sweeter flowers than thine

Can she unfold ?

What secrets tell my heart thou hast not told ?

Oh, linger in thy flight !

For shadows gather round, and should we part,

A dreary starless night

May fill my heart,—

Then pause and linger yet ere thou depart.

Linger, I ask no more,—  
Thou art enough for ever—thou alone ;  
What future can restore,  
When thou art flown,  
All that I hold from thee and call my own ?

## HOMEWARD BOUND.

I HAVE seen a fiercer tempest,  
Known a louder whirlwind blow ;  
I was wrecked off red Algiers,  
Six-and-thirty years ago.  
Young I was, and yet old seamen  
Were not strong or calm as I ;  
While life held such treasures for me,  
I felt sure I could not die.

Life I struggled for—and saved it ;  
Life alone—and nothing more ;  
Bruised, half dead, alone and helpless,  
I was cast upon the shore.  
I feared the pitiless rocks of Ocean ;  
So the great sea rose—and then  
Cast me from her friendly bosom,  
On the pitiless hearts of men.

Gaunt and dreary ran the mountains,  
With black gorges, up the land ;  
Up to where the lonely Desert  
Spreads her burning, dreary sand :  
In the gorges of the mountains,  
On the plain beside the sea,  
Dwelt my stern and cruel masters,  
The black Moors of Barbary.

Ten long years I toiled among them,  
Hopeless—as I used to say ;  
Now I know Hope burnt within me  
Fiercer, stronger, day by day :  
Those dim years of toil and sorrow  
Like one long dark dream appear ;  
One long day of weary waiting—  
Then each day was like a year.

How I cursed the land—my prison ;  
How I cursed the serpent sea—  
And the Demon Fate that showered  
All her curses upon me ;  
I was mad, I think—God pardon  
Words so terrible and wild—  
This voyage would have been my last one,  
For I left a wife and child.

Never did one tender vision  
    Fade away before my sight,  
Never once through all my slavery,  
    Burning day or dreary night ;  
In my soul it lived, and kept me,  
    Now I feel, from black despair,  
And my heart was not quite broken,  
    While they lived and blest me there.

When at night my task was over,  
    I would hasten to the shore ;  
(All was strange and foreign inland,  
    Nothing I had known before ;)   
Strange looked the bleak mountain passes,  
    Strange the red glare and black shade,  
And the Oleanders, waving  
    To the sound the fountains made.

Then I gazed at the great Ocean,  
    Till she grew a friend again ;  
And because she knew old England,  
    I forgave her all my pain :  
So the blue still sky above me,  
    With its white clouds' fleecy fold,  
And the glimmering stars, (though brighter,)  
    Looked like home and days of old.

And a calm would fall upon me,  
Worn perhaps with work and pain,  
The wild hungry longing left me,  
And I was myself again :  
Looking at the silver waters,  
Looking up at the far sky,  
Dreams of home and all I left there  
Floated sorrowfully by.

A fair face, but pale with sorrow,  
With blue eyes, brimful of tears,  
And the little red mouth, quivering  
With a smile, to hide its fears ;  
Holding out her baby towards me,  
From the sky she looked on me ;  
So it was that last I saw her,  
As the ship put out to sea.

Sometimes, (and a pang would seize me  
That the years were floating on,)  
I would strive to paint her, altered,  
And the little baby gone :  
She no longer young and girlish,  
The child, standing by her knee,  
And her face, more pale and saddened  
With the weariness for me.

Then I saw, as night grew darker,  
How she taught my child to pray,  
Holding its small hands together,  
For its father, far away ;  
And I felt her sorrow, weighing  
Heavier on me than my own ;  
Pitying her blighted spring-time,  
And her joy so early flown.

Till upon my hands (now hardened  
With the rough, harsh toil of years)  
Bitter drops of anguish falling,  
Woke me from my dream, to tears ;  
Woke me as a slave, an outcast,  
Leagues from home, across the deep ;  
So—though you may call it childish—  
So I sobbed myself to sleep.

Well, the years sped on—my Sorrow,  
Calmer, and yet stronger grown,  
Was my shield against all suffering,  
Poorer, meaner, than her own.  
Thus my cruel master's harshness  
Fell upon me all in vain,  
Yet the tale of what we suffered  
Echoed back from main to main.

You have heard in a far country  
Of a self-devoted band,  
Vowed to rescue Christian captives  
Pining in a foreign land.  
And these gentle-hearted strangers  
Year by year go forth from Rome,  
In their hands the hard-earned ransom,  
To restore some exiles home.

I was freed : they broke the tidings  
Gently to me : but indeed  
Hour by hour sped on, I knew not  
What the words meant—I was freed !  
Better so, perhaps ; while sorrow  
(More akin to earthly things)  
Only strains the sad heart's fibres—  
Joy, bright stranger, breaks the strings.

Yet at last it rushed upon me,  
And my heart beat full and fast ;  
What were now my years of waiting  
What was all the dreary past ?  
Nothing—to the impatient throbbing  
I must bear across the sea :  
Nothing—to the eternal hours  
Still between my home and me !

How the voyage passed, I know not ;  
Strange it was once more to stand  
With my countrymen around me,  
And to clasp an English hand.  
But, through all, my heart was dreaming  
Of the first words I should hear,  
In the gentle voice that echoed,  
Fresh as ever, on my ear.

Should I see her start of wonder,  
And the sudden truth arise,  
Flushing all her face and lightening  
The dimmed splendour of her eyes ?  
Oh ! to watch the fear and doubting  
Stir the silent depths of pain,  
And the rush of joy—then melting  
Into perfect peace again.

And the child !—but why remember  
Foolish fancies that I thought ?  
Every tree and every hedge-row  
From the well-known past I brought :  
I would picture my dear cottage,  
See the crackling wood-fire burn,  
And the two beside it seated,  
Watching, waiting, my return.

So, at last we reached the harbour.  
I remember nothing more  
Till I stood, my sick heart throbbing,  
With my hand upon the door.  
There I paused—I heard her speaking ;  
Low, soft, murmuring words she said ;  
Then I first knew the dumb terror  
I had had, lest she were dead.

It was evening in late autumn,  
And the gusty wind blew chill ;  
Autumn leaves were falling round me,  
And the red sun lit the hill.  
Six-and-twenty years are vanished  
Since then—I am old and grey—  
But I never told to mortal  
What I saw, until this day.

She was seated by the fire,  
In her arms she held a child,  
Whispering baby-words caressing,  
And then, looking up, she smiled :  
Smiled on him who stood beside her—  
Oh ! the bitter truth was told,  
In her look of trusting fondness—  
I had seen the look of old !

But she rose and turned towards me  
    (Cold and dumb I waited there)  
With a shriek of fear and terror,  
    And a white face of despair.  
He had been an ancient comrade—  
    Not a single word we said,  
While we gazed upon each other,  
    He the living : I the dead !

I drew nearer, nearer to her,  
    And I took her trembling hand,  
Looking on her white face, looking  
    That her heart might understand  
All the love and all the pity  
    That my lips refused to say—  
I thank God no thought save sorrow  
    Rose in our crushed hearts that day.

Bitter tears that desolate moment,  
    Bitter, bitter tears we wept,  
We three broken hearts together,  
    While the baby smiled and slept.  
Tears alone—no words were spoken,  
    Till he—till her husband said  
That my boy, (I had forgotten  
    The poor child,) that he was dead.

Then at last I rose, and, turning,  
    Wrung his hand, but made no sign ;  
And I stooped and kissed her forehead  
    Once more, as if she were mine.  
Nothing of farewell I uttered,  
    Save in broken words to pray  
That God would ever guard and bless her—  
    Then in silence passed away.

Over the great restless ocean  
    Six-and-twenty years I roam ;  
All my comrades, old and weary,  
    Have gone back to die at home.—  
Home ! yes, I shall reach a haven,  
    I, too, shall reach home and rest ;  
I shall find her waiting for me  
    With our baby on her breast.

### LIFE AND DEATH.

“WHAT is Life, Father?”

“A Battle, my child,  
Where the strongest lance may fail,

Where the wariest eyes may be beguiled,  
And the stoutest heart may quail.  
Where the foes are gathered on every hand  
And rest not day or night,  
And the feeble little ones must stand  
In the thickest of the fight."

"What is Death, Father?"

"The rest, my child,  
When the strife and the toil are o'er ;  
The Angel of God, who, calm and mild,  
Says we need fight no more ;  
Who, driving away the demon band,  
Bids the din of the battle cease ;  
Takes banner and spear from our failing hand,  
And proclaims an eternal Peace."

"Let me die, Father ! I tremble, and fear  
To yield in that terrible strife !"

"The crown must be won for Heaven, dear,  
In the battle-field of life :  
My child, though thy foes are strong and tried,  
He loveth the weak and small ;  
The Angels of Heaven are on thy side,  
And God is over all !"

## NOW.

RISE ! for the day is passing,  
 And you lie dreaming on ;  
 The others have buckled their armour,  
 And forth to the fight are gone :  
 A place in the ranks awaits you,  
 Each man has some part to play ;  
 The Past and the Future are nothing,  
 In the face of the stern To-day.

Rise from your dreams of the Future—  
 Of gaining some hard-fought field ;  
 Of storming some airy fortress,  
 Or bidding some giant yield ;  
 Your Future has deeds of glory,  
 Of honour (God grant it may !)  
 But your arm will never be stronger,  
 Or the need so great as To-day.

Rise ! if the Past detains you,  
Her sunshine and storms forget ;  
No chains so unworthy to hold you  
As those of a vain regret :  
Sad or bright, she is lifeless ever,  
Cast her phantom arms away,  
Nor look back, save to learn the lesson  
Of a nobler strife To-day.

Rise ! for the day is passing :  
The sound that you scarcely hear  
Is the enemy marching to battle—  
Arise ! for the foe is here !  
Stay not to sharpen your weapons,  
Or the hour will strike at last,  
When, from dreams of a coming battle,  
You may wake to find it past !

## CLEANSING FIRES.

LET thy gold be cast in the furnace,  
Thy red gold, precious and bright,  
Do not fear the hungry fire,  
With its caverns of burning light :

And thy gold shall return more precious,  
Free from every spot and stain ;  
For gold must be tried by fire,  
As a heart must be tried by pain !

In the cruel fire of Sorrow  
Cast thy heart, do not faint or wail ;  
Let thy hand be firm and steady,  
Do not let thy spirit quail :  
But wait till the trial is over,  
And take thy heart again ;  
For as gold is tried by fire,  
So a heart must be tried by pain !

I shall know by the gleam and glitter  
Of the golden chain you wear,  
By your heart's calm strength in loving,  
Of the fire they have had to bear.  
Beat on, true heart, for ever ;  
Shine bright, strong golden chain ;  
And bless the cleansing fire,  
And the furnace of living pain !

## THE VOICE OF THE WIND.

LET us throw more logs on the fire !

We have need of a cheerful light,  
And close round the hearth to gather,  
For the wind has risen to-night.

With the mournful sound of its wailing

It has checked the children's glee,  
And it calls with a louder clamour

Than the clamour of the sea.

Hark to the voice of the wind !

Let us listen to what it is saying,

Let us hearken to where it has been ;

For it tells, in its terrible crying,

The fearful sights it has seen.

It clatters loud at the casements,

Round the house it hurries on,

And shrieks with redoubled fury,

When we say "The blast is gone !"

Hark to the voice of the wind !

It has been on the field of battle,  
Where the dying and wounded lie;  
And it brings the last groan they uttered,  
And the ravenous vulture's cry.  
It has been where the icebergs were meeting,  
And closed with a fearful crash ;  
On shores where no foot has wandered,  
It has heard the waters dash.

Hark to the voice of the wind !

It has been on the desolate ocean,  
When the lightning struck the mast ;  
It has heard the cry of the drowning,  
Who sank as it hurried past ;  
The words of despair and anguish,  
That were heard by no living ear ;  
The gun that no signal answered ;  
It brings them all to us here.

Hark to the voice of the wind !

It has been on the lonely moorland,  
Where the treacherous snow-drift lies,  
Where the traveller, spent and weary,  
Gasped fainter and fainter cries ;  
It has heard the bay of the bloodhounds,  
On the track of the hunted slave,

The lash and the curse of the master,  
And the groan that the captive gave.  
Hark to the voice of the wind !

It has swept through the gloomy forest,  
Where the sledge was urged to its speed,  
Where the howling wolves were rushing  
On the track of the panting steed.  
Where the pool was black and lonely,  
It caught up a splash and a cry—  
Only the bleak sky heard it,  
And the wind as it hurried by.  
Hark to the voice of the wind !

Then throw more logs on the fire,  
Since the air is bleak and cold,  
And the children are drawing nigher,  
For the tales that the wind has told.  
So closer and closer gather  
Round the red and crackling light ;  
And rejoice (while the wind is blowing)  
We are safe and warm to-night.  
Hark to the voice of the wind !

## TREASURES.

LET me count my treasures,  
All my soul holds dear,  
Given me by dark spirits  
Whom I used to fear.

Through long days of anguish,  
And sad nights, did Pain  
Forge my shield, Endurance,  
Bright and free from stain !

Doubt, in misty caverns,  
'Mid dark horrors sought,  
Till my peerless jewel,  
Faith to me she brought.

Sorrow, that I wearied  
Should remain so long,  
Wreathed my starry glory,  
The bright Crown of Song.

Strife, that racked my spirit  
Without hope or rest,  
Left the blooming flower,  
Patience, on my breast.

Suffering, that I dreaded,  
Ignorant of her charms,  
Laid the fair child, Pity,  
Smiling, in my arms.

So I count my treasures,  
Stored in days long past—  
And I thank the givers,  
Whom I know at last !

*SHINING STARS.*

SHINE, ye stars of heaven,  
On a world of pain !  
See old Time destroying  
All our hoarded gain ;  
All our sweetest flowers,  
Every stately shrine,

All our hard-earned glory,  
Every dream divine !

Shine, ye stars of heaven,  
On the rolling years !  
See how Time, consoling,  
Dries the saddest tears,  
Bids the darkest storm-clouds  
Pass in gentle rain ;  
While upspring in glory,  
Flowers and dreams again !

Shine, ye stars of heaven,  
On a world of fear !  
See how Time, avenging,  
Bringeth judgment here ;  
Weaving ill won honours  
To a fiery crown ;  
Bidding hard hearts perish ;  
Casting proud hearts down.

Shine, ye stars of heaven,  
On the hours' slow flight !  
See how Time, rewarding,  
Gilds good deeds with light ;

Pays with kingly measure ;  
 Brings earth's dearest prize ;  
 Or, crowned with rays diviner,  
 Bids the end arise !

WAITING.

“ WHEREFORE dwell so sad and lonely  
 By the desolate sea-shore,  
 With the melancholy surges  
 Beating at your cottage door?

“ You shall dwell beside the castle  
 Shadowed by our ancient trees ;  
 And your life shall pass on gently,  
 Cared for, and in rest and ease.”

“ Lady, one who loved me dearly  
 Sailed for distant lands away ;  
 And I wait here his returning  
 Hopefully from day to day.

“ To my door I bring my spinning,  
 Watching every ship I see ;

Waiting, hoping, till the sunset  
Fades into the western sea.

“After sunset, at my casement,  
Still I place a signal light ;  
He will see its well-known shining  
Should his ship return at night.

“Lady, see your infant smiling,  
With its flaxen curling hair—  
I remember when your mother  
Was a baby just as fair.

“I was watching then, and hoping :  
Years have brought great change to all ;  
To my neighbours in their cottage,  
To you nobles at the hall.

“Not to me—for I am waiting,  
And the years have fled so fast,  
I must look at you to tell me  
That a weary time has past !

“When I hear a footstep coming  
On the shingle—years have fled—  
Yet amid a thousand others,  
I shall know his quick, light tread.

“When I hear (to-night it may be)  
Some one pausing at my door,  
I shall know the gay soft accents,  
Heard and welcomed oft before !

“So each day I am more hopeful,  
He may come before the night ;  
Every sunset I feel surer  
He must come ere morning light.

“Then I thank you, noble lady,  
But I cannot do your will :  
Where he left me, he must find me,  
Waiting, watching, hoping, still !”

*THE CRADLE SONG OF THE POOR.*

HUSH ! I cannot bear to see thee  
Stretch thy tiny hands in vain ;  
Dear, I have no bread to give thee,  
Nothing, child, to ease thy pain !  
When God sent thee first to bless me,  
Proud, and thankful too, was I ;

Now, my darling, I, thy mother,  
Almost long to see thee die.  
Sleep, my darling, thou art weary ;  
God is good, but life is dreary.

I have watched thy beauty fading,  
And thy strength sink day by day ;  
Soon, I know, will Want and Fever  
Take thy little life away.  
Famine makes thy father reckless,  
Hope has left both him and me ;  
We could suffer all, my baby,  
Had we but a crust for thee.  
Sleep, my darling, thou art weary ;  
God is good, but life is dreary.

Better thou shouldst perish early,  
Starve so soon, my darling one,  
Than in helpless sin and sorrow  
Vainly live, as I have done.  
Better that thy angel spirit  
With my joy, my peace, were flown,  
Than thy heart grew cold and careless,  
Reckless, hopeless, like my own.  
Sleep, my darling, thou art weary ;  
God is good, but life is dreary.

I am wasted, dear, with hunger,  
And my brain is all opprest,  
I have scarcely strength to press thee,  
Wan and feeble, to my breast.  
Patience, baby, God will help us,  
Death will come to thee and me,  
He will take us to his Heaven,  
Where no want or pain can be.  
Sleep, my darling, thou art weary ;  
God is good, but life is dreary.

Such the plaint that, late and early,  
Did we listen, we might hear  
Close beside us,—but the thunder  
Of a city dulls our ear.  
Every heart, as God's bright Angel,  
Can bid one such sorrow cease ;  
God has glory when his children  
Bring his poor ones joy and peace !  
Listen, nearer while she sings  
Sounds the fluttering of wings !

## BE STRONG.

BE strong to *hope*, oh Heart !  
Though day is bright,  
The stars can only shine  
In the dark night.  
Be strong, oh Heart of mine,  
Look towards the light !

Be strong to *bear*, oh Heart !  
Nothing is vain :  
Strive not, for life is care,  
And God sends pain,  
Heaven is above, and there  
Rest will remain !

Be strong to *love*, oh Heart !  
Love knows not wrong,  
Didst thou love—creatures even,  
Life were not long ;  
Didst thou love God in Heaven,  
Thou wouldst be strong !

## GOD'S GIFTS.

GOD gave a gift to Earth :—a child,  
Weak, innocent, and undefiled,  
Opened its ignorant eyes and smiled.

It lay so helpless, so forlorn,  
Earth took it coldly and in scorn,  
Cursing the day when it was born.

She gave it first a tarnished name,  
For heritage, a tainted fame,  
Then cradled it in want and shame.

All influence of Good or Right,  
All ray of God's most holy light,  
She curtained closely from its sight.

Then turned her heart, her eyes away,  
Ready to look again, the day  
Its little feet began to stray.

In dens of guilt the baby played,  
Where sin, and sin alone, was made  
The law that all around obeyed.

With ready and obedient care,  
He learnt the tasks they taught him there ;  
Black sin for lesson—oaths for prayer.

Then Earth arose, and, in her might,  
To vindicate her injured right,  
Thrust him in deeper depths of night.

Branding him with a deeper brand  
Of shame, he could not understand,  
The felon outcast of the land.

---

God gave a gift to Earth :—a child,  
Weak, innocent, and undefiled,  
Opened its ignorant eyes and smiled.

And Earth received the gift, and cried  
Her joy and triumph far and wide,  
Till echo answered to her pride.

She blest the hour when first he came  
To take the crown of pride and fame,  
Wreathed through long ages for his name.

Then bent her utmost art and skill  
To train the supple mind and will,  
And guard it from a breath of ill.

She strewed his morning path with flowers,  
And Love, in tender dropping showers,  
Nourished the blue and dawning hours.

She shed, in rainbow hues of light,  
A halo round the Good and Right,  
To tempt and charm the baby's sight.

And every step, of work or play,  
Was lit by some such dazzling ray,  
Till morning brightened into day.

And then the World arose, and said—  
Let added honours now be shed  
On such a noble heart and head !

O World, both gifts were pure and bright,  
Holy and sacred in God's sight :—  
God will judge them and thee aright !

## A TOMB IN GHENT.

A SMILING look she had, a figure slight,  
 With cheerful air, and step both quick and light ;  
 A strange and foreign look the maiden bore,  
 That suited the quaint Belgian dress she wore ;  
 Yet the blue fearless eyes in her fair face,  
 And her soft voice told her of English race ;  
 And ever, as she flitted to and fro,  
 She sang, (or murmured, rather,) soft and low,  
 Snatches of song, as if she did not know  
 That she was singing, but the happy load  
 Of dream and thought thus from her heart o'er-  
     flowed :

And while on household cares she passed along,  
 The air would bear me fragments of her song ;  
 Not such as village maidens sing, and few  
 The framers of her changing music knew ;  
 Chants such as heaven and earth first heard of  
     when  
 The master Palestrina held the pen.

But I with awe had often turned the page,  
Yellow with time, and half defaced by age,  
And listened, with an ear not quite unskilled,  
While heart and soul to the grand echo thrilled ;  
And much I marvelled, as her cadence fell  
From the Laudate, that I knew so well,  
Into Scarlatti's minor fugue, how she  
Had learned such deep and solemn harmony.  
But what she told I set in rhyme, as meet  
To chronicle the influence, dim and sweet,  
'Neath which her young and innocent life had  
    grown :  
Would that my words were simple as her own.

Many years since, an English workman went  
Over the seas, to seek a home in Ghent,  
Where English skill was prized ; nor toiled in  
    vain ;  
Small, yet enough, his hard-earned daily gain.  
He dwelt alone—in sorrow, or in pride,  
He mixed not with the workers by his side ;  
He seemed to care but for one present joy—  
To tend, to watch, to teach his sickly boy.  
Severe to all beside, yet for the child  
He softened his rough speech to soothings mild ;  
For him he smiled, with him each day he walked

Through the dark gloomy streets ; to him he  
talked

Of home, of England, and strange stories told  
Of English heroes in the days of old ;  
And, (when the sunset gilded roof and spire,)  
The marvellous tale which never seemed to tire :  
How the gilt dragon, glaring fiercely down  
From the great belfry, watching all the town,  
Was brought, a trophy of the wars divine,  
By a Crusader from far Palestine,  
And given to Bruges ; and how Ghent arose,  
And how they struggled long as deadly foes,  
Till Ghent, one night, by a brave soldier's skill,  
Stole the great dragon ; and she keeps it still.  
One day the dragon—so 'tis said—will rise,  
Spread his bright wings, and glitter in the skies  
And over desert lands and azure seas,  
Will seek his home 'mid palm and cedar trees.  
So, as he passed the belfry every day,  
The boy would look if it were flown away ;  
Each day surprised to find it watching there,  
Above him, as he crossed the ancient square,  
To seek the great cathedral, that had grown  
A home for him—mysterious and his own.

Dim with dark shadows of the ages past,

St. Bavon stands, solemn and rich and vast ;  
The slender pillars, in long vistas spread,  
Like forest arches meet and close o'erhead ;  
So high that, like a weak and doubting prayer,  
Ere it can float to the carved angels there,  
The silver clouded incense faints in air :  
Only the organ's voice, with peal on peal,  
Can mount to where those far-off angels kneel.  
Here the pale boy, beneath a low side-arch,  
Would listen to its solemn chant or march ;  
Folding his little hands, his simple prayer  
Melted in childish dreams, and both in air :  
While the great organ over all would roll,  
Speaking strange secrets to his innocent soul,  
Bearing on eagle-wings the great desire  
Of all the kneeling throng, and piercing higher  
Than aught but love and prayer can reach, until  
Only the silence seemed to listen still ;  
Or gathering like a sea still more and more,  
Break in melodious waves at heaven's door,  
And then fall, slow and soft, in tender rain,  
Upon the pleading longing hearts again.

Then he would watch the rosy sunlight glow,  
That crept along the marble floor below,  
Passing, as life does, with the passing hours,

Now by a shrine all rich with gems and flowers,  
Now on the brazen letters of a tomb,  
Then, leaving it again to shade and gloom,  
And creeping on, to show, distinct and quaint,  
The kneeling figure of some marble saint :  
Or lighting up the carvings strange and rare,  
That told of patient toil, and reverent care ;  
Ivy that trembled on the spray, and ears  
Of heavy corn, and slender bulrush spears,  
And all the thousand tangled weeds that grow  
In summer, where the silver rivers flow ;  
And demon-heads grotesque, that seemed to  
glare

In impotent wrath on all the beauty there :  
Then the gold rays up pillared shaft would climb  
And so be drawn to heaven, at evening time.  
And deeper silence, darker shadows flowed  
On all around, only the windows glowed  
With blazoned glory, like the shields of light  
Archangels bear, who, armed with love and  
might,

Watch upon heaven's battlements at night.  
Then all was shade ; the silver lamps that  
gleamed,  
Lost in the daylight, in the darkness seemed  
Like sparks of fire in the dim aisles to shine,

Or trembling stars before each separate shrine.  
Grown half afraid, the child would leave them  
there,  
And come out, blinded by the noisy glare  
That burst upon him from the busy square.

The church was thus his home for rest or play ;  
And as he came and went again each day,  
The pictured faces that he knew so well,  
Seemed to smile on him welcome and farewell.  
But holier, and dearer far than all,  
One sacred spot his own he loved to call ;  
Save at mid-day, half-hidden by the gloom ;  
The people call it The White Maiden's Tomb :  
For there she stands ; her folded hands are  
pressed  
Together, and laid softly on her breast,  
As if she waited but a word to rise  
From the dull earth, and pass to the blue skies ;  
Her lips expectant part, she holds her breath,  
As listening for the angel voice of death.  
None know how many years have seen her so,  
Or what the name of her who sleeps below.  
And here the child would come, and strive to  
trace,  
Through the dim twilight, the pure gentle face

He loved so well, and here he oft would bring  
Some violet blossom of the early spring ;  
And climbing softly by the fretted stand,  
Not to disturb her, lay it in her hand ;  
Or, whispering a soft loving message sweet,  
Would stoop and kiss the little marble feet.  
So, when the organ's pealing music rang,  
He thought amid the gloom the Maiden sang ;  
With reverent simple faith by her he knelt,  
And fancied what she thought, and what she felt.  
"Glory to God," re-echoed from her voice,  
And then his little spirit would rejoice ;  
Or when the Requiem sobbed upon the air,  
His baby tears dropped with her mournful prayer.

So years fled on, while childish fancies past,  
The childish love and simple faith could last.  
The artist-soul awoke in him, the flame  
Of genius, like the light of Heaven, came  
Upon his brain, and (as it will, if true)  
It touched his heart and lit his spirit, too.  
His father saw, and with a proud content  
Let him forsake the toil where he had spent  
His youth's first years, and on one happy day  
Of pride, before the old man passed away,  
He stood with quivering lips, and the big tears

Upon his cheek, and heard the dream of years  
Living and speaking to his very heart—  
The low hushed murmur at the wondrous art  
Of him, who with young trembling fingers made  
The great church-organ answer as he played ;  
And, as the uncertain sound grew full and strong,  
Rush with harmonious spirit-wings along,  
And thrill with master-power the breathless  
throng.

The old man died, and years passed on, and  
still

The young musician bent his heart and will  
To his dear toil. St. Bavon now had grown  
More dear to him, and even more his own ;  
And as he left it every night he prayed  
A moment by the archway in the shade,  
Kneeling once more within the sacred gloom  
Where the White Maiden watched upon her  
tomb.

His hopes of travel and a world-wide fame,  
Cold Time had sobered, and his fragile frame ;  
Content at last only in dreams to roam,  
Away from the tranquillity of home ;  
Content that the poor dwellers by his side  
Saw in him but the gentle friend and guide,

The patient counsellor in the poor strife  
And petty details of their common life,  
Who comforted where woe and grief might fall,  
Nor slighted any pain or want as small,  
But whose great heart took in and felt for all.

Still he grew famous—many came to be  
His pupils in the art of harmony.  
One day a voice floated so pure and free  
Above his music, that he turned to see  
What angel sang, and saw before his eyes,  
What made his heart leap with a strange surprise,  
His own White Maiden, calm, and pure, and  
mild,  
As in his childish dreams she sang and smiled ;  
Her eyes raised up to Heaven, her lips apart,  
And music overflowing from her heart.  
But the faint blush that tinged her cheek betrayed  
No marble statue, but a living maid ;  
Perplexed and startled at his wondering look,  
Her rustling score of Mozart's Sanctus shook ;  
The uncertain notes, like birds within a snare,  
Fluttered and died upon the trembling air.

Days passed ; each morning saw the maiden  
stand,

Her eyes cast down, her lesson in her hand,  
Eager to study, never weary, while  
Repaid by the approving word or smile  
Of her kind master ; days and months fled on ;  
One day the pupil from the choir was gone ;  
Gone to take light, and joy, and youth once  
more,

Within the poor musician's humble door ;  
And to repay, with gentle happy art,  
The debt so many owed his generous heart.  
And now, indeed, was one who knew and felt  
That a great gift of God within him dwelt ;  
One who could listen, who could understand,  
Whose idle work dropped from her slackened  
hand,

While with wet eyes entranced she stood, nor  
knew

How the melodious wingèd hours flew ;  
Who loved his art as none had loved before,  
Yet prized the noble tender spirit more.  
While the great organ brought from far and near  
Lovers of harmony to praise and hear,  
Unmarked by aught save what filled every day  
Duty, and toil, and rest, years passed away :  
And now by the low archway in the shade  
Beside her mother knelt a little maid,

Who, through the great cathedral learned to  
    roam,  
Climb to the choir, and bring her father home ;  
And stand, demure and solemn, by his side,  
Patient till the last echo softly died ;  
Then place her little hand in his, and go  
Down the dark winding stair to where below  
The mother knelt, within the gathering gloom  
Waiting and praying by the Maiden's Tomb.

So their life went, until, one winter's day,  
Father and child came there alone to pray—  
The mother, gentle soul, had fled away !  
Their life was altered now, and yet the child  
Forgot her passionate grief in time, and smiled,  
Half wondering why, when spring's fresh breezes  
    came,  
To see her father was no more the same.  
Half guessing at the shadow of his pain,  
And then contented if he smiled again,  
A sad cold smile, that passed in tears away,  
As re-assured she ran once more to play.  
And now each year that added grace to grace,  
Fresh bloom and sunshine to the young girl's  
    face,  
Brought a strange light in the musician's eyes,

As if he saw some starry hope arise,  
Breaking upon the midnight of sad skies.  
It might be so : more feeble year by year,  
The wanderer to his resting-place drew near.  
One day the Gloria he could play no more,  
Echoed its grand rejoicing as of yore ;  
His hands were clasped, his weary head was  
    laid,  
Upon the tomb where the White Maiden prayed:  
Where the child's love first dawned, his soul  
    first spoke,  
The old man's heart there throbbed its last and  
    broke.  
The grave cathedral that had nursed his youth,  
Had helped his dreaming, and had taught him  
    truth,  
Had seen his boyish grief and baby tears,  
And watched the sorrows and the joys of years,  
Had lit his fame and hope with sacred rays,  
And consecrated sad and happy days—  
Had blessed his happiness, and soothed his  
    pain,  
Now took her faithful servant home again.

He rests in peace : some travellers mention  
    yet

An organist whose name they all forget.  
He has a holier and a nobler fame  
By poor men's hearths, who love and bless the  
    name  
Of a kind friend ; and in low tones to-day,  
Speak tenderly of him who passed away.  
Too poor to help the daughter of their friend,  
They grieved to see the little pittance end ;  
To see her toil and strive with cheerful heart,  
To bear the lonely orphan's struggling part ;  
They grieved to see her go at last alone  
To English kinsmen she had never known :  
And here she came ; the foreign girl soon found  
Welcome, and love, and plenty all around,  
And here she pays it back with earnest will,  
By well-taught housewife watchfulness and skill ;  
Deep in her heart she holds her father's name,  
And tenderly and proudly keeps his fame ;  
And while she works with thrifty Belgian care,  
Past dreams of childhood float upon the air ;  
Some strange old chant, or solemn Latin hymn,  
That echoed through the old cathedral dim,  
When as a little child each day she went  
To kneel and pray by an old tomb in Ghent.

## THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

WHY shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel,  
Death,

Who waits thee at the portals of the skies,  
Ready to kiss away thy struggling breath,  
Ready with gentle hand to close thine eyes?

How many a tranquil soul has passed away,  
Fled gladly from fierce pain and pleasures  
dim,

To the eternal splendour of the day ;  
And many a troubled heart still calls for him.

Spirits too tender for the battle here  
Have turned from life, its hopes, its fears, its  
charms ;

And children, shuddering at a world so drear,  
Have smiling passed away into his arms.

He whom thou fearest will, to ease its pain,  
Lay his cold hand upon thy aching heart :  
Will soothe the terrors of thy troubled brain,  
And bid the shadow of earth's grief depart.

He will give back what neither time, nor might,  
Nor passionate prayer, nor longing hope re-  
store,  
(Dear as to long blind eyes recovered sight,)  
He will give back those who are gone before.

Oh, what were life, if life were all ? Thine eyes  
Are blinded by their tears, or thou wouldst see  
Thy treasures wait thee in the far-off skies,  
And Death, thy friend, will give them all to  
thee.

### A DREAM.

ALL yesterday I was spinning,  
Sitting alone in the sun ;  
And the dream that I spun was so lengthy,  
It lasted till day was done.

I heeded not cloud or shadow  
That flitted over the hill,  
Or the humming-bees, or the swallows,  
Or the trickling of the rill.

I took the threads for my spinning,  
All of blue summer air,  
And a flickering ray of sunlight  
Was woven in here and there.

The shadows grew longer and longer,  
The evening wind passed by,  
And the purple splendour of sunset  
Was flooding the western sky.

But I could not leave my spinning,  
For so fair my dream had grown,  
I heeded not, hour by hour,  
How the silent day had flown.

At last the grey shadows fell round me,  
And the night came dark and chill,  
And I rose and ran down the valley,  
And left it all on the hill.

I went up the hill this morning  
To the place where my spinning lay—  
There was nothing but glistening dewdrops  
Remained of my dream to-day.

### THE PRESENT.

Do not crouch to-day, and worship  
The old Past, whose life is fled.  
Hush your voice to tender reverence ;  
Crowned he lies, but cold and dead :  
For the Present reigns our monarch,  
With an added weight of hours ;  
Honour her, for she is mighty !  
Honour her, for she is ours !

See the shadows of his heroes  
Girt around her cloudy throne ;  
Every day the ranks are strengthened  
By great hearts to him unknown ;  
Noble things the great Past promised,  
Holy dreams, both strange and new ;  
But the Present shall fulfil them,  
What he promised, she shall do.

She inherits all his treasures,  
    She is heir to all his fame,  
And the light that lightens round her  
    Is the lustre of his name ;  
She is wise with all his wisdom,  
    Living on his grave she stands,  
On her brow she bears his laurels,  
    And his harvest in her hands.

Coward, can she reign and conquer  
    If we thus her glory dim?  
Let us fight for her as nobly  
    As our fathers fought for him.  
God, who crowns the dying ages,  
    Bids her rule, and us obey—  
Bids us cast our lives before her,  
    Bids us serve the great To-day.

## CHANGES.

MOURN, O rejoicing heart !  
The hours are flying ;  
Each one some treasure takes,  
Each one some blossom breaks,  
And leaves it dying ;  
The chill dark night draws near,  
Thy sun will soon depart,  
And leave thee sighing ;  
Then mourn, rejoicing heart,  
The hours are flying !

Rejoice, O grieving heart !  
The hours fly fast ;  
With each some sorrow dies,  
With each some shadow flies,  
Until at last  
The red dawn in the east  
Bids weary night depart,  
And pain is past.  
Rejoice then, grieving heart,  
The hours fly fast !

## STRIVE, WAIT, AND PRAY.

STRIVE ; yet I do not promise  
The prize you dream of to-day  
Will not fade when you think to grasp it,  
And melt in your hand away ;  
But another and holier treasure,  
You would now perchance disdain,  
Will come when your toil is over,  
And pay you for all your pain.

Wait ; yet I do not tell you  
The hour you long for now  
Will not come with its radiance vanished,  
And a shadow upon its brow ;  
Yet far through the misty future,  
With a crown of starry light,  
An hour of joy you know not  
Is winging her silent flight.

Pray ; though the gift you ask for  
May never comfort your fears,

May never repay your pleading,  
Yet pray, and with hopeful tears ;  
An answer, not that you long for,  
But diviner, will come one day ;  
Your eyes are too dim to see it,  
Yet strive, and wait, and pray.

### A LAMENT FOR THE SUMMER.

MOAN, oh ye Autumn Winds !  
Summer has fled,  
The flowers have closed their tender leaves and  
die ;  
The Lily's gracious head  
All low must lie,  
Because the gentle Summer now is dead.

Grieve, oh ye Autumn Winds !  
Summer lies low ;  
The rose's trembling leaves will soon be shed,  
For she that loved her so,  
Alas, is dead !  
And one by one her loving children go.

Wail, oh ye Autumn Winds !  
    She lives no more,  
The gentle Summer, with her balmy breath,  
    Still sweeter than before  
When nearer death,  
    And brighter every day the smile she wore !

Mourn, mourn, oh Autumn Winds,  
    Lament and mourn ;  
How many half-blown buds must close and die ;  
    Hopes with the Summer born  
All faded lie,  
    And leave us desolate and Earth forlorn !

### THE UNKNOWN GRAVE.

No name to bid us know  
    Who rests below,  
No word of death or birth,  
    Only the grass's wave,  
Over a mound of earth,  
    Over a nameless grave.

*THE UNKNOWN GRAVE.*

Did this poor wandering heart  
In pain depart?  
Longing, but all too late,  
For the calm home again,  
Where patient watchers wait,  
And still will wait in vain.

Did mourners come in scorn,  
And thus forlorn,  
Leave him, with grief and shame,  
To silence and decay,  
And hide the tarnished name  
Of the unconscious clay?

It may be from his side  
His loved ones died,  
And last of some bright band,  
(Together now once more,)  
He sought his home, the land  
Where they had gone before.

No matter—limes have made  
As cool a shade,  
And lingering breezes pass  
As tenderly and slow,

As if beneath the grass  
A monarch slept below.

No grief, though loud and deep,  
Could stir that sleep ;  
And earth and heaven tell  
Of rest that shall not cease,  
Where the cold world's farewell  
Fades into endless peace.

*GIVE ME THY HEART.*

WITH echoing steps the worshippers  
Departed one by one ;  
The organ's pealing voice was stilled,  
The vesper hymn was done ;  
The shadows fell from roof and arch,  
Dim was the incensed air,  
One lamp alone with trembling ray,  
Told of the Presence there !

In the dark church she knelt alone ;  
Her tears were falling fast ;

“ Help, Lord,” she cried, “ the shades of death  
Upon my soul are cast !

Have I not shunned the path of sin,  
And chosen the better part ? ”

What voice came through the sacred air ?—

*“ My child, give me thy Heart ! ”*

“ Have I not laid before Thy shrine  
My wealth, oh Lord ? ” she cried ;

“ Have I kept aught of gems or gold,  
To minister to pride ?

Have I not bade youth’s joys retire,  
And vain delights depart ? ”—

But sad and tender was the voice—

*“ My child, give me thy Heart ! ”*

“ Have I not, Lord, gone day by day  
Where Thy poor children dwell ;

And carried help, and gold, and food ?

Oh Lord, Thou knowest it well !

From many a house, from many a soul,  
My hand bids care depart : ”—

More sad, more tender, was the voice—

*“ My child, give me thy Heart ! ”*

“Have I not worn my strength away  
With fast and penance sore?  
Have I not watched and wept?” she cried :  
“Did Thy dear Saints do more?  
Have I not gained Thy grace, oh Lord,  
And won in Heaven my part?”—  
It echoed louder in her soul—  
“*My child, give me thy Heart!*”

“For I have loved thee with a love  
No mortal heart can show ;  
A love so deep, my Saints in heaven  
Its depths can never know :  
When pierced and wounded on the Cross,  
Man’s sin and doom were mine,  
I loved thee with undying love,  
Immortal and divine !

“I loved thee ere the skies were spread :  
My soul bears all thy pains ;  
To gain thy love my sacred Heart  
In earthly shrines remains :  
Vain are thy offerings, vain thy sighs,  
Without one gift divine,  
Give it, my child, thy Heart to me,  
And it shall rest in mine !”

In awe she listened, and the shade  
Passed from her soul away ;  
In low and trembling voice she cried—  
“ Lord, help me to obey !  
Break Thou the chains of earth, oh Lord,  
That bind and hold my heart ;  
Let it be Thine, and Thine alone,  
Let none with Thee have part.

“ Send down, oh Lord, Thy sacred fire !  
Consume and cleanse the sin  
That lingers still within its depths :  
Let heavenly love begin.  
That sacred flame Thy Saints have known,  
Kindle, oh Lord, in me,  
Thou above all the rest for ever,  
And all the rest in Thee.”

The blessing fell upon her soul ;  
Her angel by her side  
Knew that the hour of peace was come ;  
Her soul was purified :  
The shadows fell from roof and arch,  
Dim was the incensed air—  
But Peace went with her as she left  
The sacred Presence there !

## THE WAYSIDE INN.

A LITTLE past the village  
The Inn stood, low and white ;  
Green shady trees behind it,  
And an orchard on the right ;  
Where over the green paling  
The red-checked apples hung,  
As if to watch how wearily  
The sign-board creaked and swung.

The heavy-laden branches,  
Over the road hung low,  
Reflected fruit or blossom  
From the wayside well below ;  
Where children, drawing water,  
Looked up and paused to see  
Amid the apple-branches,  
A purple Judas Tree.

The road stretched winding onward  
For many a weary mile—  
So dusty foot-sore wanderers  
Would pause and rest awhile ;  
And panting horses halted,  
And travellers loved to tell  
The quiet of the wayside inn,  
The orchard, and the well.

Here Maurice dwelt ; and often  
The sunburnt boy would stand  
Gazing upon the distance,  
And shading with his hand  
His eyes, while watching vainly  
For travellers, who might need  
His aid to loose the bridle,  
And tend the weary steed.

And once (the boy remembered  
That morning, many a day—  
The dew lay on the hawthorn,  
The bird sang on the spray)  
A train of horsemen, nobler  
Than he had seen before,  
Up from the distance gallopped,  
And halted at the door.

Upon a milk-white pony,  
Fit for a faery queen,  
Was the loveliest little damsel  
His eyes had ever seen :  
A serving-man was holding  
The leading rein, to guide  
The pony and its mistress,  
Who cantered by his side.

Her sunny ringlets round her  
A golden cloud had made,  
While her large hat was keeping  
Her calm blue eyes in shade ;  
One hand held fast the silken reins  
To keep her steed in check,  
The other pulled his tangled mane,  
Or stroked his glossy neck.

And as the boy brought water,  
And loosed the rein, he heard  
The sweetest voice that thanked him  
In one low gentle word ;  
She turned her blue eyes from him,  
Looked up, and smiled to see  
The hanging purple blossoms  
Upon the Judas Tree ;

And showed it with a gesture,  
Half pleading, half command,  
Till he broke the fairest blossom  
And laid it in her hand ;  
And she tied it to her saddle  
With a ribbon from her hair,  
While her happy laugh rang gaily,  
Like silver on the air.

But the champing steeds were rested—  
The horsemen now spurred on,  
And down the dusty highway  
They vanished and were gone.  
Years passed, and many a traveller  
Paused at the old inn-door,  
But the little milk-white pony  
And the child returned no more.

Years passed, the apple-branches  
A deeper shadow shed ;  
And many a time the Judas Tree,  
Blossom and leaf, lay dead ;  
When on the loitering western breeze  
Came the bells' merry sound,  
And flowery arches rose, and flags  
And banners waved around.

Maurice stood there expectant :  
The bridal train would stay  
Some moments at the inn-door,  
The eager watchers say ;  
They come—the cloud of dust draws near—  
'Mid all the state and pride,  
He only sees the golden hair  
And blue eyes of the bride.

The same, yet, ah, still fairer ;  
He knew the face once more  
That bent above the pony's neck  
Years past at that inn-door :  
Her shy and smiling eyes looked round  
Unconscious of the place,  
Unconscious of the eager gaze  
He fixed upon her face.

He plucked a blossom from the tree—  
The Judas Tree—and cast  
Its purple fragrance towards the Bride,  
A message from the Past.  
The signal came, the horses plunged—  
Once more she smiled around :  
The purple blossom in the dust  
Lay trampled on the ground.

Again the slow years fled,  
Their passage only known  
By the height the Passion-flower  
Around the porch had grown ;  
And many a passing traveller  
Paused at the old inn-door,  
But the bride, so fair and blooming,  
The bride returned no more.

One winter morning, Maurice,  
Watching the branches bare,  
Rustling and waving dimly  
In the grey and misty air,  
Saw blazoned on a carriage  
Once more the well-known shield,  
The stars and azure fleurs-de-lis  
Upon a silver field.

He looked—was that pale woman,  
So grave, so worn, so sad,  
The child, once young and smiling,  
The bride, once fair and glad ?  
What grief had dimmed that glory,  
And brought that dark eclipse  
Upon her blue eyes' radiance,  
And paled those trembling lips ?

What memory of past sorrow,  
What stab of present pain,  
Brought that deep look of anguish,  
That watched the dismal rain,  
That watched (with the absent spirit  
That looks, yet does not see)  
The dead and leafless branches  
Upon the Judas Tree.

The slow dark months crept onward  
Upon their icy way,  
Till April broke in showers,  
And Spring smiled forth in May ;  
Upon the apple-blossoms  
The sun shone bright again,  
When slowly up the highway  
Came a long funeral train.

The bells tolled slowly, sadly,  
For a noble spirit fled ;  
Slowly, in pomp and honour,  
They bore the quiet dead.  
Upon a black-plumed charger  
One rode, who held a shield,  
Where stars and azure fleurs-de-lis  
Shone on a silver field.

'Mid all that homage given  
To a fluttering heart at rest,  
Perhaps an honest sorrow  
Dwelt only in one breast.  
One by the inn-door standing  
Watched with fast-dropping tears  
The long procession passing,  
And thought of bygone years.

The boyish, silent homage  
To child and bride unknown,  
The pitying tender sorrow  
Kept in his heart alone,  
Now laid upon the coffin  
With a purple flower, might be  
Told to the cold dead sleeper ;—  
The rest could only see  
A fragrant purple blossom,  
Plucked from a Judas Tree.

## VOICES OF THE PAST.

YOU wonder that my tears should flow  
In listening to that simple strain ;  
That those unskilful sounds should fill  
My soul with joy and pain—  
How can you tell what thoughts it stirs  
Within my heart again ?

You wonder why that common phrase,  
So all unmeaning to your ear,  
Should stay me in my merriest mood,  
And thrill my soul to hear—  
How can you tell what ancient charm  
Has made me hold it dear ?

You marvel that I turn away  
From all those flowers so fair and bright,  
And gaze at this poor herb, till tears  
Arise and dim my sight—  
You cannot tell how every leaf  
Breathes of a past delight.

You smile to see me turn and speak  
With one whose converse you despise ;  
You do not see the dreams of old  
That with his voice arise—  
How can you tell what links have made  
Him sacred in my eyes ?

Oh, these are Voices of the Past,  
Links of a broken chain,  
Wings that can bear me back to Times  
Which cannot come again—  
Yet God forbid that I should lose  
The echoes that remain !

### THE DARK SIDE.

THOU hast done well, perhaps,  
To lift the bright disguise,  
And lay the bitter truth  
Before our shrinking eyes ;  
When evil crawls below  
What seems so pure and fair,  
Thine eyes are keen and true  
To find the serpent there :

And yet—I turn away ;  
Thy task is not divine—  
The evil angels look  
On earth with eyes like thine.

Thou hast done well, perhaps,  
To show how closely wound  
Dark threads of sin and self  
With our best deeds are found ;  
How great and noble hearts,  
Striving for lofty aims,  
Have still some earthly cord  
A meaner spirit claims ;  
And yet—although thy task  
Is well and fairly done,  
Methinks for such as thou  
There is a holier one.

Shadows there are, who dwell  
Among us, yet apart,  
Deaf to the claim of God,  
Or kindly human heart ;  
Voices of earth and heaven  
Call, but they turn away,  
And Love, through such black night  
Can see no hope of day ;

And yet---our eyes are dim,  
And thine are keener far—  
Then gaze till thou canst see  
The glimmer of some star.

The black stream flows along  
Whose waters we despise—  
Show us reflected there  
Some fragment of the skies ;  
'Neath tangled thorns and briars,  
(The task is fit for thee,)  
Seek for the hidden flowers,  
We are too blind to see ;  
Then will I thy great gift  
A crown and blessing call ;  
Angels look thus on men,  
And God sees good in all !

### A FIRST SORROW.

ARISE ! this day shall shine,  
For evermore,  
To thee a star divine,  
On Time's dark shore.

Till now thy soul has been  
All glad and gay :  
Bid it awake, and look  
At grief to-day !

No shade has come between  
Thee and the sun ;  
Like some long childish dream  
Thy life has run :

But now the stream has reached  
A dark, deep sea,  
And Sorrow, dim and crowned,  
Is waiting thee.

Each of God's soldiers bears  
A sword divine :  
Stretch out thy trembling hands  
To-day for thine !

To each anointed Priest  
God's summons came :  
Oh, Soul, he speaks to-day  
And calls thy name.

Then, with slow reverent step,  
And beating heart,  
From out thy joyous days,  
Thou must depart.

And, leaving all behind,  
Come forth, alone,  
To join the chosen band  
Around the throne.

Raise up thine eyes—be strong,  
Nor cast away  
The crown, that God has given  
Thy soul to-day !

### MURMURS.

WHY wilt thou make bright music  
Give forth a sound of pain ?  
Why wilt thou weave fair flowers  
Into a weary chain ?

Why turn each cool grey shadow  
Into a world of fears ?

Why say the winds are wailing ?  
Why call the dewdrops tears ?

The voices of happy nature,  
And the Heaven's sunny gleam,  
Reprove thy sick heart's fancies,  
Upbraid thy foolish dream.

Listen, and I will tell thee  
The song Creation sings,  
From the humming of bees in the heather,  
To the flutter of angels' wings.

An echo rings for ever,  
The sound can never cease ;  
It speaks to God of glory,  
It speaks to Earth of peace.

Not alone did angels sing it  
To the poor shepherds' ear ;  
But the spherèd Heavens chant it,  
While listening ages hear.

Above thy peevish wailing  
Rises that holy song ;  
Above Earth's foolish clamour.  
Above the voice of wrong.

No creature of God's too lowly  
To murmur peace and praise :  
When the starry nights grow silent,  
Then speak the sunny days.

So leave thy sick heart's fancies,  
And lend thy little voice  
To the silver song of glory  
That bids the world rejoice.

### GIVE.

SEE the rivers flowing  
Downwards to the sea,  
Pouring all their treasures  
Bountiful and free—  
Yet to help their giving  
Hidden springs arise ;  
Or, if need be, showers  
Feed them from the skies !

Watch the princely flowers  
Their rich fragrance spread,

Load the air with perfumes,  
From their beauty shed—  
Yet their lavish spending  
Leaves them not in dearth,  
With fresh life replenished  
By their mother earth !

Give thy heart's best treasures—  
From fair Nature learn ;  
Give thy love—and ask not,  
Wait not a return !  
And the more thou spendest  
From thy little store,  
With a double bounty,  
God will give thee more.

*MY JOURNAL.*

It is a dreary evening ;  
The shadows rise and fall :  
With strange and ghostly changes  
They flicker on the wall.

Make the charred logs burn brighter ;  
I will show you, by their blaze,  
The half-forgotten record  
Of bygone things and days.

Bring here the ancient volume ;  
The clasp is old and worn,  
The gold is dim and tarnished,  
And the faded leaves are torn.

The dust has gathered on it—  
There are so few who care  
To read what Time has written  
Of joy and sorrow there.

Look at the first fair pages ;  
Yes—I remember all :  
The joys now seem so trivial,  
The griefs so poor and small.

Let us read the dreams of glory  
That childish fancy made ;  
Turn to the next few pages,  
And see how soon they fade.

Here, where still waiting, dreaming,  
For some ideal Life,

The young heart all unconscious  
Had entered on the strife.

See how this page is blotted :  
What—could those tears be mine?  
How coolly I can read you,  
Each blurred and trembling line.

Now I can reason calmly,  
And, looking back again,  
Can see divinest meaning  
Threading each separate pain.

Here strong resolve—how broken ;  
Rash hope, and foolish fear,  
And prayers, which God in pity  
Refused to grant or hear.

Nay—I will turn the pages  
To where the tale is told  
Of how a dawn diviner  
Flushed the dark clouds with gold.

And see, that light has gilded  
The story—nor shall set ;  
And, though in mist and shadow,  
You know I see it yet.

Here—well, it does not matter,  
I promised to read all ;  
I know not why I falter,  
Or why my tears should fall ;

You see each grief is noted ;  
Yet it was better so—  
I can rejoice to-day—the pain  
Was over, long ago.

I read—my voice is failing,  
But you can understand  
How the heart beat that guided  
This weak and trembling hand.

Pass over that long struggle,  
Read where the comfort came  
Where the first time is written  
Within the book your name.

Again it comes, and oftener,  
Linked, as it now must be,  
With all the joy or sorrow  
That Life may bring to me.

So all the rest—you know it :  
Now shut the clasp again,

And put aside the record  
Of bygone hours of pain.

The dust shall gather on it,  
I will not read it more :  
Give me your hand—what was it  
We were talking of before ?

I know not why—but tell me  
Of something gay and bright.  
It is strange—my heart is heavy,  
And my eyes are dim to-night.

*A CHAIN.*

THE bond that links our souls together ;  
Will it last through stormy weather ?  
Will it moulder and decay  
As the long hours pass away ?  
Will it stretch if Fate divide us,  
When dark and weary hours have tried us ?  
Oh, if it look too poor and slight  
Let us break the links to-night !

It was not forged by mortal hands,  
Or clasped with golden bars and bands ;  
Save thine and mine, no other eyes  
The slender link can recognise :  
In the bright light it seems to fade—  
And it is hidden in the shade ;  
While Heaven nor Earth have never heard  
Or solemn vow, or plighted word.

Yet what no mortal hand could make,  
No mortal power can ever break ;  
What words or vows could never do,  
No words or vows can make untrue ;  
And if to other hearts unknown  
The dearer and the more our own,  
Because too sacred and divine  
For other eyes, save thine and mine.

And see, though slender, it is made  
Of Love and Trust, and can they fade ?  
While, if too slight it seem, to bear  
The breathings of the summer air,  
We know that it could bear the weight  
Of a most heavy heart of late,  
And as each day and hour flew  
The stronger for its burthen grew.

And, too, we know and feel again  
It has been sanctified by pain,  
For what God deigns to try with sorrow  
He means not to decay to-morrow,  
But through that fiery trial last  
When earthly ties and bonds are past ;  
What slighter things dare not endure  
Will make our Love more safe and pure.

Love shall be purified by Pain,  
And Pain be soothed by Love again :  
So let us now take heart and go  
Cheerfully on, through joy and woe ;  
No change the summer sun can bring,  
Or the inconstant skies of spring,  
Or the bleak winter's stormy weather,  
For we shall meet them, Love, together !

### THE PILGRIMS.

THE way is long and dreary,  
The path is bleak and bare ;  
Our feet are worn and weary,  
But we will not despair.

More heavy was Thy burthen,  
More desolate Thy way ;—  
Oh Lamb of God who takest  
The sin of the world away,  
*Have mercy on us.*

The snows lie thick around us  
In the dark and gloomy night ;  
And the tempest wails above us,  
And the stars have hid their light ;  
But blacker was the darkness  
Round Calvary's Cross that day ;—  
Oh Lamb of God who takest  
The sin of the world away,  
*Have mercy on us.*

Our hearts are faint with sorrow,  
Heavy and hard to bear ;  
For we dread the bitter morrow,  
But we will not despair :  
Thou knowest all our anguish,  
And Thou wilt bid it cease,—  
Oh Lamb of God who takest  
The sin of the world away,  
*Give us Thy Peace !*

## INCOMPLETENESS.

NOTHING resting in its own completeness  
 Can have worth or beauty : but alone  
 Because it leads and tends to farther sweetness,  
 Fuller, higher, deeper than its own.

Spring's real glory dwells not in the meaning,  
 Gracious though it be, of her blue hours ;  
 But is hidden in her tender leaning  
 To the Summer's richer wealth of flowers.

Dawn is fair, because the mists fade slowly  
 Into Day, which floods the world with light ;  
 Twilight's mystery is so sweet and holy  
 Just because it ends in starry Night.

Childhood's smiles unconscious graces borrow  
 From Strife, that in a far-off future lies ;  
 And angel glances (veiled now by Life's sorrow)  
 Draw our hearts to some belovèd eyes.

Life is only bright when it proceedeth  
Towards a truer, deeper Life above ;  
Human Love is sweetest when it leadeth  
To a more divine and perfect Love.

Learn the mystery of Progression duly :  
Do not call each glorious change, Decay ;  
But know we only hold our treasures truly,  
When it seems as if they passed away.

Nor dare to blame God's gifts for incomplete-  
ness ;  
In that want their beauty lies : they roll  
Towards some infinite depth of love and sweet-  
ness,  
Bearing onward man's reluctant soul.

### A LEGEND OF BREGENZ.

GIRT round with rugged mountains  
The fair Lake Constance lies ;  
In her blue heart reflected  
Shine back the starry skies ;

And, watching each white cloudlet  
Float silently and slow,  
You think a piece of Heaven  
Lies on our earth below !

Midnight is there : and Silence,  
Enthroned in Heaven, looks dawn  
Upon her own calm mirror,  
Upon a sleeping town :  
For Bregenz, that quaint city  
Upon the Tyrol shore,  
Has stood above Lake Constance,  
A thousand years and more.

Her battlements and towers,  
From off their rocky steep,  
Have cast their trembling shadow  
For ages on the deep :  
Mountain, and lake, and valley,  
A sacred legend know,  
Of how the town was saved, one night  
Three hundred years ago.

For from her home and kindred,  
A Tyrol maid had fled,

To serve in the Swiss valleys,  
And toil for daily bread ;  
And every year that fled  
So silently and fast,  
Seemed to bear farther from her  
The memory of the Past.

She served kind, gentle masters,  
Nor asked for rest or change ;  
Her friends seemed no more new ones,  
Their speech seemed no more strange ;  
And when she led her cattle  
To pasture every day,  
She ceased to look and wonder  
On which side Bregenz lay.

She spoke no more of Bregenz,  
With longing and with tears ;  
Her Tyrol home seemed faded  
In a deep mist of years ;  
She heeded not the rumours  
Of Austrian war and strife ;  
Each day she rose contented,  
To the calm toils of life.

Yet, when her master's children  
Would clustering round her stand,  
She sang them ancient ballads  
Of her own native land ;  
And when at morn and evening  
She knelt before God's throne,  
The accents of her childhood  
Rose to her lips alone.

And so she dwelt : the valley  
More peaceful year by year ;  
When suddenly strange portents,  
Of some great deed seemed near.  
The golden corn was bending  
Upon its fragile stalk,  
While farmers, heedless of their fields,  
Paced up and down in talk.

The men seemed stern and altered,  
With looks cast on the ground ;  
With anxious faces, one by one,  
The women gathered round ;  
All talk of flax, or spinning,  
Or work, was put away ;  
The very children seemed afraid  
To go alone to play.

One day, out in the meadow  
With strangers from the town,  
Some secret plan discussing,  
The men walked up and down.  
Yet, now and then seemed watching,  
A strange uncertain gleam,  
That looked like lances 'mid the trees,  
That stood below the stream.

At eve they all assembled,  
Then care and doubt were fled ;  
With jovial laugh they feasted ;  
The board was nobly spread.  
The elder of the village  
Rose up, his glass in hand,  
And cried, " We drink the downfall  
" Of an accursèd land !

" The night is growing darker,  
" Ere one more day is flown,  
" Bregenz, our foemen's stronghold,  
" Bregenz shall be our own !"  
The women shrank in terror,  
(Yet Pride, too, had her part,)  
But one poor Tyrol maiden  
Felt death within her heart.

Before her stood fair Bregenz ;  
Once more her towers arose ;  
What were the friends beside her ?  
Only her country's foes !  
The faces of her kinsfolk,  
The days of childhood flown,  
The echoes of her mountains,  
Reclaimed her as their own !

Nothing she heard around her,  
(Though shouts rang forth again,)  
Gone were the green Swiss valleys,  
The pasture, and the plain ;  
Before her eyes one vision,  
And in her hear one cry,  
That said, " Go forth, save Bregenz,  
And then, if need be, die ! "

With trembling haste and breathless,  
With noiseless step she sped ;  
Horses and weary cattle  
Were standing in the shed ;  
She loosed the strong white charger,  
That fed from out her hand,  
She mounted, and she turned his head  
Towards her native land.

Out—out into the darkness—  
Faster, and still more fast ;  
The smooth grass flies behind her,  
The chestnut wood is past ;  
She looks up ; clouds are heavy :  
Why is her steed so slow ?—  
Scarcely the wind beside them,  
Can pass them as they go.

“Faster !” she cries, “Oh faster !”  
Eleven the church-bells chime :  
“Oh God,” she cries, “help Bregenz,  
And bring me there in time !”  
But louder than bells’ ringing,  
Or lowing of the kine,  
Grows nearer in the midnight  
The rushing of the Rhine.

Shall not the roaring waters  
Their headlong gallop check ?  
The steed draws back in terror,  
She leans upon his neck  
To watch the flowing darkness ;  
The bank is high and steep ;  
One pause—he staggers forward,  
And plunges in the deep.

She strives to pierce the blackness,  
And looser throws the rein ;  
Her steed must breast the waters  
That dash above his mane.  
How gallantly, how nobly,  
He struggles through the foam,  
And see—in the far distance,  
Shine out the lights of home !

Up the steep banks he bears her,  
And now, they rush again  
Towards the heights of Bregenz,  
That tower above the plain.  
They reach the gate of Bregenz,  
Just as the midnight rings,  
And out come serf and soldier  
To meet the news she brings.

Bregenz is saved ! Ere daylight  
Her battlements are manned ;  
Defiance greets the army  
That marches on the land.  
And if to deeds heroic  
Should endless fame be paid,  
Bregenz does well to honour  
The noble Tyrol maid.

Three hundred years are vanished,  
And yet upon the hill  
An old stone gateway rises,  
To do her honour still.  
And there, when Bregenz women  
Sit spinning in the shade,  
They see in quaint old carving  
The Charger and the Maid.

And when, to guard old Bregenz,  
By gateway, street, and tower,  
The warder paces all night long,  
And calls each passing hour ;  
“ Nine,” “ ten,” “ eleven,” he cries aloud,  
And then (Oh crown of Fame !)  
When midnight pauses in the skies,  
He calls the maiden’s name !

### A FAREWELL.

FAREWELL, oh dream of mine  
I dare not stay ;  
The hour is come, and time  
Will not delay :

Pleasant and dear to me  
Wilt thou remain ;  
No future hour  
Brings thee again.

She stands, the Future dim,  
And draws me on,  
And shows me dearer joys—  
But thou art gone !  
Treasures and Hopes more fair,  
Bears she for me,  
And yet I linger,  
Oh dream, with thee !

Other and brighter days,  
Perhaps she brings ;  
Deeper and holier songs,  
Perchance she sings ;  
But thou and I, fair time,  
We too must sever—  
Oh dream of mine,  
Farewell for ever !

## SOWING AND REAPING.

Sow with a generous hand ;  
Pause not for toil or pain ;  
Weary not through the heat of summer,  
Weary not through the cold spring rain ;  
But wait till the autumn comes  
For the sheaves of golden grain.

Scatter the seed, and fear not,  
A table will be spread ;  
What matter if you are too weary  
To eat your hard-earned bread :  
Sow, while the earth is broken,  
For the hungry must be fed.

Sow ;—while the seeds are lying  
In the warm earth's bosom deep,  
And your warm tears fall upon it—  
They will stir in their quiet sleep ;  
And the green blades rise the quicker,  
Perchance, for the tears you weep.

Then sow ;—for the hours are fleeting,  
And the seed must fall to-day ;  
And care not what hands shall reap it,  
Or if you shall have passed away  
Before the waving corn-fields  
Shall gladden the sunny day.

Sow ; and look onward, upward,  
Where the starry light appears—  
Where, in spite of the coward's doubting,  
Or your own heart's trembling fears,  
You shall reap in joy the harvest  
You have sown to-day in tears.

## THE STORM.

THE tempest rages wild and high,  
The waves lift up their voice and cry  
Fierce answers to the angry sky,—  
*Miserere Domine.*

Through the black night and driving rain,  
A ship is struggling, all in vain,  
To live upon the stormy main ;—  
*Miserere Domine.*

The thunders roar, the lightnings glare,  
Vain is it now to strive or dare ;  
A cry goes up of great despair,—

*Miserere Domine.*

The stormy voices of the main,  
The moaning wind, and pelting rain  
Beat on the nursery window pane :—

*Miserere Domine.*

Warm curtained was the little bed,  
Soft pillowed was the little head ;  
“ The storm will wake the child,” they said :—

*Miserere Domine.*

Cowering among his pillows white  
He prays, his blue eyes dim with fright,  
“ Father, save those at sea to-night !”—

*Miserere Domine.*

The morning shone all clear and gay,  
On a ship at anchor in the bay,  
And on a little child at play,—

*Gloria tibi Domine !*

## WORDS.

WORDS are lighter than the cloud-foam  
Of the restless ocean spray ;  
Vainer than the trembling shadow  
That the next hour steals away.  
By the fall of summer raindrops  
Is the air as deeply stirred ;  
And the rose-leaf that we tread on  
Will outlive a word.

Yet, on the dull silence breaking  
With a lightning flash, a Word,  
Bearing endless desolation  
On its blighting wings, I heard :  
Earth can forge no keener weapon,  
Dealing surer death and pain,  
And the cruel echo answered  
Through long years again.

I have known one word hang starlike  
O'er a dreary waste of years,

And it only shone the brighter  
Looked at through a mist of tears ;  
While a weary wanderer gathered  
Hope and heart on Life's dark way,  
By its faithful promise, shining  
Clearer day by day.

I have known a spirit, calmer  
Than the calmest lake, and clear  
As the heavens that gazed upon it,  
With no wave of hope or fear ;  
But a storm had swept across it,  
And its deepest depths were stirred,  
(Never, never more to slumber,)  
Only by a word.

I have known a word more gentle  
Than the breath of summer air ;  
In a listening heart it nestled,  
And it lived for ever there.  
Not the beating of its prison  
Stirred it ever, night or day ;  
Only with the heart's last throbbing  
Could it fade away.

Words are mighty, words are living :  
Serpents with their venomous stings,

Or bright angels, crowding round us,  
With heaven's light upon their wings :  
Every word has its own spirit,  
True or false, that never dies ;  
Every word man's lips have uttered  
Echoes in God's skies.

*A LOVE TOKEN.*

Do you grieve no costly offering  
To the Lady you can make ?  
One there is, and gifts less worthy  
Queens have stooped to take.

Take a Heart of virgin silver,  
Fashion it with heavy blows,  
Cast it into Love's hot furnace  
When it fiercest glows.

With Pain's sharpest point transfix it,  
And then carve in letters fair,  
Tender dreams and quaint devices,  
Fancies sweet and rare.

Set within it Hope's blue sapphire,  
Many-changing opal fears,  
Blood-red ruby-stones of daring,  
Mixed with pearly tears.

And when you have wrought and laboured  
Till the gift is all complete,  
You may humbly lay your offering  
At the Lady's feet.

Should her mood perchance be gracious—  
With disdainful smiling pride,  
She will place it with the trinkets  
Glittering at her side.

### A TRYST WITH DEATH.

I AM footsore and very weary,  
But I travel to meet a Friend :  
The way is long and dreary,  
But I know that it soon must end.

He is travelling fast like the whirlwind,  
And though I creep slowly on,  
We are drawing nearer, nearer,  
And the journey is almost done.

Through the heat of many summers,  
Through many a springtime rain,  
Through long autumns and weary winters,  
I have hoped to meet him, in vain.

I know that he will not fail me,  
So I count every hour chime,  
Every throb of my own heart's beating,  
That tells of the flight of Time.

On the day of my birth he plighted  
His kingly word to me :—  
I have seen him in dreams so often,  
That I know what his smile must be.

I have toiled through the sunny woodland,  
Through fields that basked in the light ;  
And through the lone paths in the forest  
I crept in the dead of night.

I will not fear at his coming,  
Although I must meet him alone ;  
He will look in my eyes so gently,  
And take my hand in his own.

Like a dream all my toil will vanish,  
When I lay my head on his breast—  
But the journey is very weary,  
And he only can give me rest !

### FIDELIS.

YOU have taken back the promise  
That you spoke so long ago ;  
Taken back the heart you gave me—  
I must even let it go.

Where Love once has breathed, Pride dieth :  
So I struggled, but in vain,  
First to keep the links together,  
Then to piece the broken chain.

But it might not be—so freely  
All your friendship I restore,

And the heart that I had taken  
As my own for evermore.  
No shade of reproach shall touch you,  
Dread no more a claim from me—  
But I will not have you fancy  
That I count myself as free.

I am bound by the old promise ;  
What can break that golden chain ?  
Not even the words that you have spoken,  
Or the sharpness of my pain :  
Do you think, because you fail me  
And draw back your hand to-day,  
That from out the heart I gave you  
My strong love can fade away ?

It will live. No eyes may see it ;  
In my soul it will lie deep,  
Hidden from all ; but I shall feel it  
Often stirring in its sleep.  
So remember, that the friendship  
Which you now think poor and vain,  
Will endure in hope and patience,  
Till you ask for it again.

Perhaps in some long twilight hour,  
Like those we have known of old,  
When past shadows gather round you,  
And your present friends grow cold,  
You may stretch your hands out towards me,—  
Ah ! you will—I know not when—  
I shall nurse my love and keep it  
Faithfully, for you, till then.

### A SHADOW.

WHAT lack the valleys and mountains  
That once were green and gay ?  
What lack the babbling fountains ?  
Their voice is sad to-day.  
Only the sound of a voice,  
Tender and sweet and low,  
That made the earth rejoice,  
A year ago !

What lack the tender flowers ?  
A shadow is on the sun :

What lack the merry hours,  
That I long that they were done ?  
Only two smiling eyes,  
That told of joy and mirth :  
They are shining in the skies,  
I mourn on earth !

What lacks my heart, that makes it  
So weary and full of pain,  
That trembling Hope forsakes it,  
Never to come again ?  
Only another heart,  
Tender and all mine own,  
In the still grave it lies ;  
I weep alone !

### THE SAILOR BOY.

MY Life you ask of ? why, you know  
Full soon my little Life is told ;  
It has had no great joy or woe,  
For I am only twelve years old.  
Ere long I hope I shall have been

On my first voyage, and wonders seen.  
Some princess I may help to free  
From pirates, on a far-off sea ;  
Or, on some desert isle be left,  
Of friends and shipmates all bereft.

For the first time I venture forth,  
From our blue mountains of the north.  
My kinsman kept the lodge that stood  
Guarding the entrance near the wood,  
By the stone gateway grey and old,  
With quaint devices carved about,  
And broken shields ; while dragons bold  
Glared on the common world without ;  
And the long trembling ivy spray  
Half hid the centuries' decay.  
In solitude and silence grand  
The castle towered above the land :  
The castle of the Earl, whose name  
(Wrapped in old bloody legends) came  
Down through the times when Truth and Right  
Bent down to armed Power and Might.  
He owned the country far and near ;  
And, for some weeks in every year,  
(When the brown leaves were falling fast  
And the long, lingering autumn passed,)

He would come down to hunt the deer,  
With hound and horse in splendid pride.  
The story lasts the live-long year,  
The peasant's winter evening fills,  
When he is gone and they abide  
In the lone quiet of their hills.

I longed, too, for the happy night,  
When, all with torches flaring bright,  
The crowding villagers would stand,  
A patient, eager, waiting band,  
Until the signal ran like flame—  
“They come!” and, slackening speed, they  
came.

Outriders first, in pomp and state,  
Pranced on their horses through the gate ;  
Then the four steeds as black as night,  
All decked with trappings blue and white,  
Drew through the crowd that opened wide,  
The Earl and Countess side by side.  
The stern grave Earl, with formal smile  
And glistening eyes and stately pride,  
Could ne'er my childish gaze beguile  
From the fair presence by his side.  
The lady's soft sad glance, her eyes,  
(Like stars that shone in summer skies,)

Her pure white face so calmly bent,  
With gentle greetings round her sent ;  
Her look, that always seemed to gaze  
Where the blue past had closed again  
Over some happy shipwrecked days,  
With all their freight of love and pain :  
She did not even seem to see  
The little lord upon her knee.  
And yet he was like angel fair,  
With rosy cheeks and golden hair,  
That fell on shoulders white as snow :  
But the blue eyes that shone below  
His clustering rings of auburn curls,  
Were not his mother's, but the Earl's.

I feared the Earl, so cold and grim,  
I never dared be seen by him.  
When through our gate he used to ride,  
My kinsman Walter bade me hide ;  
He said he was so stern.  
So, when the hunt came past our way,  
I always hastened to obey,  
Until I heard the bugles play  
The notes of their return.  
But she—my very heart-strings stir  
Whene'er I speak or think of her—

The whole wide world could never see  
A noble lady such as she,  
So full of angel charity.

Strange things of her our neighbours told  
In the long winter evenings cold,  
Around the fire. They would draw near  
And speak half-whispering, as in fear ;  
As if they thought the Earl could hear  
Their treason 'gainst his name.  
They thought the story that his pride  
Had stooped to wed a low-born bride,  
A stain upon his fame.  
Some said 'twas false ; there could not be  
Such blot on his nobility :  
But others vowed that they had heard  
The actual story word for word,  
From one who well my lady knew,  
And had declared the story true.

In a far village, little known,  
She dwelt—so ran the tale—alone.  
A widowed bride, yet, oh ! so bright,  
Shone through the mist of grief, her charms ;  
They said it was the loveliest sight—  
She with her baby in her arms.

The Earl, one summer morning, rode  
By the sea-shore where she abode ;  
Again he came—that vision sweet  
Drew him reluctant to her feet.  
Fierce must the struggle in his heart  
Have been, between his love and pride,  
Until he chose that wondrous part,  
To ask her to become his bride.  
Yet, ere his noble name she bore,  
He made her vow that nevermore  
She would behold her child again,  
But hide his name and hers from men.  
The trembling promise duly spoken,  
All links of the low past were broken ;  
And she arose to take her stand  
Amid the nobles of the land.  
Then all would wonder—could it be  
That one so lowly born as she,  
Raised to such height of bliss, should seem  
Still living in some weary dream ?  
'Tis true she bore with calmest grace  
The honours of her lofty place,  
Yet never smiled, in peace or joy,  
Not even to greet her princely boy.  
She heard, with face of white despair,  
The cannon thunder through the air,

That she had given the Earl an heir.  
Nay, even more, (they whispered low,  
As if they scarce durst fancy so,)   
That, through her lofty wedded life,  
No word, no tone, betrayed the wife.  
Her look seemed ever in the past ;  
Never to him it grew more sweet ;  
The self-same weary glance she cast  
Upon the grey-hound at her feet,  
As upon him, who bade her claim  
The crowning honour of his name.

    This gossip, if old Walter heard,  
He checked it with a scornful word :  
I never durst such tales repeat ;  
He was too serious and discreet  
To speak of what his lord might do ;  
Besides, he loved my lady too.  
And many a time, I recollect,  
They were together in the wood ;  
He, with an air of grave respect,  
And earnest look, uncovered stood.  
And though their speech I never heard,  
(Save now and then a louder word,)  
I saw he spake as none but one  
She loved and trusted, durst have done ;

For oft I watched them in the shade  
That the close forest branches made,  
Till slanting golden sunbeams came  
And smote the fir-trees into flame,  
A radiant glory round her lit,  
Then down her white robes seemed to flit,  
Gilding the brown leaves on the ground,  
And all the waving ferns around.  
While by some gloomy pine she leant  
And he in earnest talk would stand,  
I saw the tear-drops, as she bent,  
Fall on the flowers in her hand.—  
Strange as it seemed and seems to be,  
That one so sad, so cold as she,  
Could love a little child like me—  
Yet so it was. I never heard  
Such tender words as she would say,  
And murmurs, sweeter than a word,  
Would breathe upon me as I lay.  
While I, in smiling joy, would rest,  
For hours, my head upon her breast.  
Our neighbours said that none could see  
In me the common childish charms,  
(So grave and still I used to be,)  
And yet she held me in her arms,  
In a fond clasp, so close, so tight—

I often dream of it at night.  
She bade me tell her all—no other  
My childish thoughts e'er cared to know :  
For I—I never knew my mother ;  
I was an orphan long ago.  
And I could all my fancies pour,  
That gentle loving face before.  
She liked to hear me tell her all ;  
How that day I had climbed the tree,  
To make the largest fir-cones fall ;  
And how one day I hoped to be  
A sailor on the deep blue sea—  
She loved to hear it all !

Then wondrous things she used to tell,  
Of the strange dreams that she had known.  
I used to love to hear them well,  
If only for her sweet low tone,  
Sometimes so sad, although I knew  
That such things never could be true.  
One day she told me such a tale  
It made me grow all cold and pale,  
The fearful thing she told !  
Of a poor woman mad and wild  
Who coined the life-blood of her child,  
And, tempted by a fiend, had sold

The heart out of her breast for gold.  
But, when she saw me frightened seem,  
She smiled, and said it was a dream.  
When I look back and think of her,  
My very heart-strings seem to stir ;  
How kind, how fair she was, how good  
I cannot tell you. If I could  
You, too, would love her. The mere thought  
Of her great love for me has brought  
Tears in my eyes : though far away,  
It seems as it were yesterday.  
And just as when I look on high  
Through the blue silence of the sky,  
Fresh stars shine out, and more and more,  
Where I could see so few before ;  
So, the more steadily I gaze  
Upon those far-off misty days,  
Fresh words, fresh tones, fresh memories start  
Before my eyes and in my heart.  
I can remember how one day  
(Talking in silly childish way)  
I said how happy I should be  
If I were like her son—as fair,  
With just such bright blue eyes as he,  
And such long locks of golden hair.  
A strange smile on her pale face broke,

And in strange solemn words she spoke :

“ My own, my darling one—no, no !

I love you, far, far better so.

I would not change the look you bear,

Or one wave of your dark brown hair.

The mere glance of your sunny eyes,

Deep in my deepest soul I prize

Above that baby fair !

Not one of all the Earl's proud line

In beauty ever matched with thine ;

And, 'tis by thy dark locks thou art

Bound even faster round my heart,

And made more wholly mine ! ”

And then she paused, and weeping said,

“ You are like one who now is dead—

Who sleeps in a far-distant grave.

Oh may God grant that you may be

As noble and as good as he,

As gentle and as brave ! ”

Then in my childish way I cried,

“ The one you tell me of, who died,

Was he as noble as the Earl ? ”

I see her red lips scornful curl,

I feel her hold my hand again

So tightly, that I shrink in pain—

I seem to hear her say,

“ He whom I tell you of, who died,  
He was so noble and so gay,  
So generous and so brave,  
That the proud Earl by his dear side  
Would look a craven slave.”  
She paused ; ‘then, with a quivering sigh,  
She laid her hand upon my brow :  
“ Live like him, darling, and so die.  
Remember that he tells you now,  
True peace, real honour, and content,  
In cheerful pious toil abide ;  
That gold and splendour are but sent  
To curse our vanity and pride.”

One day some childish fever pain  
Burnt in my veins and fired my brain.  
Moaning, I turned from side to side ;  
And, sobbing in my bed, I cried,  
‘Till night in calm and darkness crept  
Around me, and at last I slept.  
When suddenly I woke to see  
The Lady bending over me.  
The drops of cold November rain  
Were falling from her long, damp hair ;  
Her anxious eyes were dim with pain ;  
Yet she looked wondrous fair.

Arrayed for some great feast she came,  
With stones that shone and burnt like flame ;  
Wound round her neck, like some bright snake,  
And set like stars within her hair,  
They sparkled so, they seemed to make  
A glory everywhere.

I felt her tears upon my face,  
Her kisses on my eyes ;  
And a strange thought I could not trace  
I felt within my heart arise ;

And, half in feverish pain, I said :

“ Oh if my mother were not dead ! ”

And Walter bade me sleep ; but she  
Said, “ Is it not the same to thee  
That *I* watch by thy bed ? ”

I answered her, “ I love you, too ;

But it can never be the same ;

She was no Countess like to you,

Nor wore such sparkling stones of flame.”

Oh the wild look of fear and dread !

The cry she gave of bitter woe !

I often wonder what I said

To make her moan and shudder so.

Through the long night she tended me

With such sweet care and charity.

But I should weary you to tell

All that I know and love so well :  
Yet one night more stands out alone  
With a sweet sadness all its own.

The wind blew loud that dreary night :  
Its wailing voice I well remember ;  
The stars shone out so large and bright  
Upon the frosty fir-boughs white,  
That dreary night of cold December.  
I saw old Walter silent stand,  
Watching the soft white flakes of snow  
With looks I could not understand,  
Of strange perplexity and woe.  
At last he turned and took my hand,  
And said the Countess just had sent  
To bid us come ; for she would fain  
See me once more, before she went  
Away—never to come again.  
We came in silence through the wood  
(Our footfall was the only sound)  
To where the great white castle stood,  
With darkness shadowing it around.  
Breathless, we trod with cautious care  
Up the great echoing marble stair ;  
Trembling, by Walter's hand I held,  
Scared by the splendours I beheld :

Now thinking, "Should the Earl appear!"  
Now looking up with giddy fear  
To the dim vaulted roof, that spread  
Its gloomy arches overhead.  
Long corridors we softly past,  
(My heart was beating loud and fast)  
And reached the Lady's room at last :  
A strange faint odour seemed to weigh  
Upon the dim and darkened air ;  
One shaded lamp, with softened ray,  
Scarce showed the gloomy splendour there.  
The dull red brands were burning low,  
And yet a fitful gleam of light,  
Would now and then, with sudden glow,  
Start forth, and sink again in night.  
I gazed around, yet half in fear,  
Till Walter told me to draw near :  
And in the strange and flickering light,  
Towards the Lady's bed I crept ;  
All folded round with snowy white,  
She lay ; (one would have said she slept ;)   
So still the look of that white face,  
It seemed as it were carved in stone,  
I paused before I dared to place  
Within her cold white hand my own.  
But, with a smile of sweet surprise,

She turned to me her dreamy eyes ;  
And slowly, as if life were pain,  
She drew me in her arms to lie :  
She strove to speak, and strove in vain ;  
Each breath was like a long-drawn sigh.  
The throbs that seemed to shake her breast,  
The trembling clasp, so loose and weak,  
At last grew calmer, and at rest ;  
And then she strove once more to speak :  
“ My God, I thank thee, that my pain  
Of day by day and year by year,  
Has not been suffered all in vain,  
And I may die while he is near.  
I will not fear but that Thy grace  
Has swept away my sin and woe,  
And sent this little angel face,  
In my last hour to tell me so.”  
(And here her voice grew faint and low,)  
“ My child, where’er thy life may go,  
To know that thou art brave and true,  
Will pierce the highest heavens through,  
And even there my soul shall be  
More joyful for this thought of thee.”  
She folded her white hands, and stayed  
All cold and silently she lay :  
I knelt beside the bed, and prayed

The prayer she used to make me say.  
I said it many times, and then  
She did not move, but seemed to be  
In a deep sleep, nor stirred again.  
No sound woke in the silent room,  
Or broke the dim and solemn gloom,  
Save when the brands that burnt so low,  
With noisy fitful gleam of light,  
Would spread around a sudden glow,  
Then sink in silence and in night.  
How long I stood I do not know :  
At last poor Walter came, and said  
(So sadly) that we now must go,  
And whispered, she we loved was dead.  
He bade me kiss her face once more,  
Then led me sobbing to the door.  
I scarcely knew what dying meant,  
Yet a strange grief, before unknown,  
Weighed on my spirit as we went  
And left her lying all alone.

We went to the far North once more,  
To seek the well-remembered home,  
Where my poor kinsman dwelt before,  
Whence now he was too old to roam ;  
And there six happy years we past,

Happy and peaceful till the last ;  
When poor old Walter died, and he  
Blessed me and said I now might be  
A sailor on the deep blue sea.  
And so I go ; and yet in spite  
Of all the joys I long to know,  
Though I look onward with delight,  
With something of regret I go ;  
And young or old, on land or sea,  
One guiding memory I shall take—  
Of what She prayed that I might be,  
And what I will be for her sake !

### A CROWN OF SORROW.

A SORROW, wet with early tears  
Yet bitter, had been long with me ;  
I wearied of this weight of years,  
And would be free.

I tore my Sorrow from my heart,  
I cast it far away in scorn ;  
Right joyful that we two could part—  
Yet most forlorn.

I sought, (to take my Sorrow's place,)  
Over the world for flower or gem—  
But she had had an ancient grace  
Unknown to them.

I took once more with strange delight  
My slighted Sorrow ; proudly now,  
I wear it, set with stars of light,  
Upon my brow.

## THE LESSON OF THE WAR.

(1855.)

THE feast is spread through England  
For rich and poor to-day ;  
Greetings and laughter may be there,  
But thoughts are far away ;  
Over the stormy ocean,  
Over the dreary track,  
Where some are gone, whom England  
Will never welcome back.

Breathless she waits, and listens  
For every eastern breeze  
That bears upon its bloody wings  
News from beyond the seas.  
The leafless branches stirring  
Make many a watcher start ;  
The distant tramp of steeds may send  
A throb from heart to heart.

The rulers of the nation,  
The poor ones at their gate,  
With the same eager wonder  
The same great news await.  
The poor man's stay and comfort,  
The rich man's joy and pride,  
Upon the bleak Crimean shore  
Are fighting side by side.

The bullet comes—and either  
A desolate hearth may see ;  
And God alone to-night knows where  
The vacant place may be !  
The dread that stirs the peasant  
Thrills nobles' hearts with fear—  
Yet above selfish sorrow  
Both hold their country dear.

The rich man who reposes  
    In his ancestral shade,  
The peasant at his ploughshare,  
    The worker at his trade,  
Each one his all has perilled,  
    Each has the same great stake,  
Each soul can but have patience,  
    Each heart can only break !

Hushed is all party clamour ;  
    One thought in every heart,  
One dread in every household,  
    Has bid such strife depart.  
England has called her children ;  
    Long silent—the word came  
That lit the smouldering ashes  
    Through all the land to flame.

Oh you who toil and suffer,  
    You gladly heard the call ;  
But those you sometimes envy  
    Have they not given their all ?  
Oh you who rule the nation,  
    Take now the toil-worn hand—  
Brothers you are in sorrow,  
    In duty to your land.

Learn but this noble lesson  
Ere Peace returns again,  
And the life-blood of Old England  
Will not be shed in vain.

## THE TWO SPIRITS.

(1855.)

LAST night, when weary silence fell on all,  
And starless skies arose so dim and vast,  
I heard the Spirit of the Present call  
Upon the sleeping Spirit of the Past.  
Far off and near, I saw their radiance shine,  
And listened while they spoke of deeds divine.

*The Spirit of the Past.*

My deeds are writ in iron ;  
My glory stands alone ;  
A veil of shadowy honour  
Upon my tombs is thrown ;

The great names of my heroes  
Like gems in history lie ;  
To live they deemed ignoble,  
Had they the chance to die !

*The Spirit of the Present.*

My children, too, are honoured ;  
Dear shall their memory be  
To the proud lands that own them ;  
Dearer than thine to thee ;  
For, though they hold that sacred  
Is God's great gift of life,  
At the first call of duty  
They rush into the strife !

*The Spirit of the Past.*

Then, with all valiant precepts  
Woman's soft heart was fraught ;  
"Death, not dishonour," echoed  
The war-cry she had taught.  
Fearless and glad, those mothers,  
At bloody deaths elate,  
Cried out they bore their children  
Only for such a fate !

*The Spirit of the Present.*

Though such stern laws of honour  
Are faded now away,  
Yet many a mourning mother,  
With nobler grief than they,  
Bows down in sad submission :  
The heroes of the fight  
Learnt at her knee the lesson,  
“For God and for the Right !”

*The Spirit of the Past.*

No voice there spake of sorrow :  
They saw the noblest fall  
With no repining murmur ;  
Stern Fate was lord of all.  
And when the loved ones perished,  
One cry alone arose,  
Waking the startled echoes,  
“Vengeance upon our foes !”

*The Spirit of the Present.*

Grief dwells in France and England  
For many a noble son ;

Yet louder than the sorrow,  
    "Thy will, Oh God, be done!"  
From desolate homes is rising  
    One prayer, "Let carnage cease!  
On friends and foes have mercy,  
    Oh Lord, and give us peace!"

*The Spirit of the Past.*

Then, every hearth was honoured  
    That sent its children forth,  
To spread their country's glory,  
    And gain her south or north.  
Then, little recked they numbers,  
    No band would ever fly,  
But stern and resolute they stood  
    To conquer or to die.

*The Spirit of the Present.*

And now from France and England  
    Their dearest and their best  
Go forth to succour freedom,  
    To help the much oppressed;  
Now, let the far-off Future  
    And Past bow down to-day,

Before the few young hearts that hold  
Whole armaments at bay.

*The Spirit of the Past.*

Then, each one strove for honour,  
Each for a deathless name ;  
Love, home, rest, joy, were offered  
As sacrifice to Fame.  
They longed that in far ages  
Their deeds might still be told,  
And distant times and nations  
Their names in honour hold.

*The Spirit of the Present.*

Though nursed by such old legends,  
Our heroes of to-day  
Go cheerfully to battle  
As children go to play ;  
They gaze with awe and wonder  
On your great names of pride,  
Unconscious that their own will shine  
In glory side by side !

Day dawned ; and as the Spirits passed away,  
Methought I saw, in the dim morning grey,  
The Past's bright diadem had paled before  
The starry crown the glorious Present wore.

*A LITTLE LONGER.*

A LITTLE longer yet—a little longer,  
Shall violets bloom for thee, and sweet birds  
sing ;  
And the lime branches where soft winds are  
blowing  
Shall murmur the sweet promise of the Spring !

A little longer yet—a little longer,  
Thou shalt behold the quiet of the morn ;  
While tender grasses and awakening flowers  
Send up a golden mist to greet the dawn !

A little longer yet—a little longer,  
The tenderness of twilight shall be thine,  
The rosy clouds that float o'er dying daylight,  
Nor fade till trembling stars begin to shine.

A little longer yet—a little longer,  
Shall starry night be beautiful for thee ;  
And the cold moon shall look through the blue  
    silence, ,  
Flooding her silver path upon the sea.

A little longer yet—a little longer,  
Life shall be thine ; life with its power to will ;  
Life with its strength to bear, to love, to conquer,  
Bringing its thousand joys thy heart to fill.

A little longer yet—a little longer,  
The voices thou hast loved shall charm thine  
    ear ;  
And thy true heart, that now beats quick to hear  
    them,  
A little longer yet shall hold them dear.

A little longer yet—joy while thou mayest ;  
Love and rejoice ! for time has nought in store :  
And soon the darkness of the grave shall bid  
    thee  
Love and rejoice and feel and know no more.

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A little longer still—Patience, Belovèd :  
A little longer still, ere Heaven unroll

The Glory, and the Brightness, and the Wonder,  
Eternal, and divine, that waits thy Soul !

A little longer ere Life true, immortal,  
(Not this our shadowy Life,) will be thine own ;  
And thou shalt stand where winged Archangels  
    worship,  
And trembling bow before the Great White  
    Throne.

A little longer still, and Heaven awaits thee,  
And fills thy spirit with a great delight ;  
Then our pale joys will seem a dream forgotten,  
Our Sun a darkness, and our Day a Night.

A little longer, and thy Heart, Belovèd,  
Shall beat for ever with a Love divine ;  
And joy so pure, so mighty, so eternal,  
No creature knows and lives, will then be thine.

A little longer yet—and angel voices  
Shall ring in heavenly chant upon thine ear ;  
Angels and Saints await thee, and God needs  
    thee :  
Belovèd, can we bid thee linger here !

## GRIEF.

AN ancient enemy have I,  
 And either he or I must die ;  
 For he never leaveth me,  
 Never gives my soul relief,  
 Never lets my sorrow cease,  
 Never gives my spirit peace—  
 For mine enemy is Grief !

Pale he is, and sad and stern ;  
 And whene'er he cometh nigh,  
 Blue and dim the torches burn,  
 Pale and shrunk the roses turn ;  
 While my heart that he has pierced  
 Many a time with fiery lance,  
 Beats and trembles at his glance :  
 Clad in burning steel is he,  
 All my strength he can defy ;  
 For he never leaveth me—  
 And one of us must die !  
 I have said, " Let ancient sages  
 Charm me from my thoughts of pain ! "

So I read their deepest pages,  
And I strove to think—in vain !  
Wisdom's cold calm words I tried,  
But he was seated by my side :—  
Learning I have won in vain ;  
She cannot rid me of my pain.

When at last soft sleep comes o'er me,  
A cold hand is on my heart ;  
Stern sad eyes are there before me ;  
Not in dreams will he depart :  
And when the same dreary vision  
From my weary brain has fled,  
Daylight brings the living phantom,  
He is seated by my bed,  
Bending o'er me all the while,  
With his cruel, bitter smile,  
Ever with me, ever nigh ;—  
And either he or I must die !

Then I said, long time ago,  
“ I will flee to other climes,  
I will leave mine ancient foe ! ”  
Though I wandered far and wide—  
Still he followed at my side.

And I fled where the blue waters  
Bathe the sunny isles of Greece ;  
Where Thessalian mountains rise  
Up against the purple skies ;  
Where a haunting memory liveth  
In each wood and cave and rill ;  
But no dream of gods could help me—  
He went with me still !

I have been where Nile's broad river  
Flows upon the burning sand ;  
Where the desert monster broodeth,  
Where the Eastern palm-trees stand ;  
I have been where pathless forests  
Spread a black eternal shade ;  
Where the lurking panther hiding  
Glares from every tangled glade ;  
But in vain I wandered wide,  
He was always by my side !

Then I fled where snows eternal  
Cold and dreary ever lie ;  
Where the rosy lightnings gleam,  
Flashing through the northern sky ;  
Where the red sun turns again  
Back upon his path of pain ;—

But a shadowy form was with me—  
I had fled in vain !

I have thought, " If I can gaze  
Sternly on him he will fade,  
For I know that he is nothing  
But a dim ideal shade."  
As I gazed at him the more,  
He grew stronger than before !

Then I said, " Mine arm is strong,  
I will make him turn and flee :"  
I have struggled with him long—  
But that could never be !

Once I battled with him so  
That I thought I laid him low ;  
Then in trembling joy I fled,  
While again and still again  
Murmuring to myself I said,  
" Mine old enemy is dead !"  
And I stood beneath the stars,  
When a chill came on my frame,  
And a fear I could not name,  
And a sense of quick despair,  
And, lo !—mine enemy was there !

Listen, for my soul is weary,  
Weary of its endless woe ;  
I have called on one to aid me  
Mightier even than my foe.  
Strength and hope fail day by day ;  
I shall cheat him of his prey ;  
Some day soon, I know not when,  
He will stab me through and through ;  
He has wounded me before,  
But my heart can bear no more ;  
Pray that hour may come to me,  
Only then shall I be free ;  
Death alone has strength to take me  
Where my foe can never be ;  
Death, and Death alone, has power  
To conquer mine old enemy !

### THE TRIUMPH OF TIME.

THE tender delicate Flowers,  
I saw them fanned by a warm western wind,  
Fed by soft summer showers,  
Shielded by care, and yet, (oh Fate unkind !)  
Fade in a few short hours.

The gentle and the gay,  
Rich in a glorious Future of bright deeds,  
Rejoicing in the day,  
Are met by Death, who sternly, sadly leads  
Them far away.

And Hopes, perfumed and bright,  
So lately shining, wet with dew and tears,  
Trembling in morning light ;  
I saw them change to dark and anxious fears  
Before the night !

I wept that all must die—  
“ Yet Love,” I cried, “ doth live, and conquer  
death—”

And Time passed by,  
And breathed on Love, and killed it with his  
breath  
Ere Death was nigh.

More bitter far than all  
It was to know that Love could change and die—  
Hush ! for the ages call  
“ The Love of God lives through eternity,  
And conquers all ! ”

## A PARTING.

WITHOUT one bitter feeling let us part—  
And for the years in which your love has shed  
A radiance like a glory round my head,  
I thank you, yes, I thank you from my heart.

I thank you for the cherished hope of years,  
A starry future, dim and yet divine,  
Winging its way from Heaven to be mine,  
Laden with joy, and ignorant of tears.

I thank you, yes, I thank you even more  
That my heart learnt not without love to  
live,  
But gave and gave, and still had more to give,  
From an abundant and exhaustless store.

I thank you, and no grief is in these tears ;  
I thank you, not in bitterness but truth,  
For the fair vision that adorned my youth  
And glorified so many happy years.

Yet how much more I thank you that you tore  
At length the veil your hand had woven away,  
Which hid my idol was a thing of clay,  
And false the altar I had knelt before.

I thank you that you taught me the stern truth,  
(None other could have told and I believed,)   
That vain had been my life, and I deceived,  
And wasted all the purpose of my youth.

I thank you that your hand dashed down the  
shrine,  
Wherein my idol worship I had paid ;  
Else had I never known a soul was made  
To serve and worship only the Divine.

I thank you that the heart I cast away  
On such as you, though broken, bruised and  
crushed,  
Now that its fiery throbbing is all hushed,  
Upon a worthier altar I can lay.

I thank you for the lesson that such love  
Is a perverting of God's royal right,  
That it is made but for the Infinite,  
And all too great to live except above.

I thank you for a terrible awaking,  
And if reproach seemed hidden in my pain,  
And sorrow seemed to cry on your disdain,  
Know that my blessing lay in your forsaking.

Farewell for ever now :—in peace we part ;  
And should an idle vision of my tears  
Arise before your soul in after years—  
Remember that I thank you from my heart !

### THE GOLDEN GATE.

DIM shadows gather thickly round, and up the  
misty stair they climb,  
The cloudy stair that upward leads to where the  
closed portals shine,  
Round which the kneeling spirits wait the open-  
ing of the Golden Gate.

And some with eager longing go, still pressing  
forward, hand in hand,  
And some with weary step and slow, look back  
where their Belovèd stand—  
Yet up the misty stair they climb, led onward by  
the Angel Time.

As unseen hands roll back the doors, the light  
that floods the very air

Is but the shadow from within, of the great glory  
hidden there—

And morn and eve, and soon and late, the  
shadows pass within the gate.

As one by one they enter in, and the stern portals  
close once more,

The halo seems to linger round those kneeling  
closest to the door :

The joy that lightened from that place shines  
still upon the watcher's face.

The faint low echo that we hear of far-off music  
seems to fill

The silent air with love and fear, and the world's  
clamours all grow still,

Until the portals close again, and leave us toil-  
ing on in pain.

Complain not that the way is long—what road  
is weary that leads there?

But let the Angel take thy hand, and lead thee  
up the misty stair,

And then with beating heart await the opening  
of the Golden Gate.

## PHANTOMS.

BACK, ye Phantoms of the Past ;  
In your dreary caves remain :  
What have I to do with memories  
Of a long-forgotten pain ?

For my Present is all peaceful,  
And my Future nobly planned :  
Long ago Time's mighty billows  
Swept your footsteps from the sand.

Back into your caves ; nor haunt me  
With your voices full of woe ;  
I have buried grief and sorrow  
In the depths of Long-ago.

See the glorious clouds of morning  
Roll away, and clear and bright  
Shine the rays of cloudless daylight—  
Wherefore will ye moan of night ?

Never shall my heart be burthened  
With its ancient woe and fears ;  
I can drive them from my presence,  
I can check these foolish tears.

Back, ye Phantoms ; leave, oh, leave me  
To a new and happy lot ;  
Speak no more of things departed ;  
Leave me—for I know ye not.

Can it be that 'mid my gladness  
I must ever hear you wail,  
Of the grief that wrung my spirit,  
And that made my cheek so pale ?

Joy is mine ; but your sad voices  
Murmur ever in mine ear :  
Vain is all the Future's promise,  
While the dreary Past is here.

Vain, oh worse than vain, the Visions  
That my heart, my life would fill,  
If the Past's relentless phantoms  
Call upon me still !

## THANKFULNESS.

MY God, I thank Thee who hast made  
 The Earth so bright ;  
 So full of splendour and of joy,  
 Beauty and light ;  
 So many glorious things are here,  
 Noble and right !

I thank Thee, too, that Thou hast made  
 Joy to abound ;  
 So many gentle thoughts and deeds  
 Circling us round,  
 That in the darkest spot of Earth  
 Some love is found.

I thank Thee *more* that all our joy  
 Is touched with pain ;  
 That shadows fall on brightest hours ;  
 That thorns remain ;  
 So that Earth's bliss may be our guide,  
 And not our chain.

For Thou who knowest, Lord, how soon  
Our weak heart clings,  
Hast given us joys, tender and true,  
Yet all with wings,  
So that we see, gleaming on high,  
Diviner things !

I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast kept  
The best in store ;  
We have enough, yet not too much  
To long for more :  
A yearning for a deeper peace,  
Not known before.

I thank Thee, Lord, that here our souls,  
Though amply blest,  
Can never find, although they seek,  
A perfect rest—  
Nor ever shall, until they lean  
On Jesus' breast !

## HOME-SICKNESS.

WHERE I am, the halls are gilded,  
 Stored with pictures bright and rare ;  
 Strains of deep melodious music  
 Float upon the perfumed air :—  
 Nothing stirs the dreary silence  
 Save the melancholy sea,  
 Near the poor and humble cottage,  
 Where I fain would be !

Where I am, the sun is shining,  
 And the purple windows glow,  
 Till their rich armorial shadows  
 Stain the marble floor below :—  
 Faded Autumn leaves are trembling,  
 On the withered jasmine tree,  
 Creeping round the little casement,  
 Where I fain would be !

Where I am, the days are passing  
 O'er a pathway strewn with flowers ;  
 Song and joy and starry pleasures  
 Crown the happy smiling hours :—

Slowly, heavily, and sadly,  
Time with weary wings must flee,  
Marked by pain, and toil, and sorrow,  
Where I fain would be !

Where I am, the great and noble  
Tell me of renown and fame,  
And the red wine sparkles highest,  
To do honour to my name :—  
Far away a place is vacant,  
By a humble hearth, for me,  
Dying embers dimly show it,  
Where I fain would be !

Where I am, are glorious dreamings,  
Science, genius, art divine ;  
And the great minds whom all honour  
Interchange their thoughts with mine :—  
A few simple hearts are waiting,  
Longing, wearying, for me,  
Far away where tears are falling,  
Where I fain would be !

Where I am, all think me happy,  
For so well I played my part,  
None can guess, who smile around me,  
How far distant is my heart—

Far away, in a poor cottage,  
Listening to the dreary sea,  
Where the treasures of my life are,  
Where I fain would be !

### WISHES.

ALL the fluttering wishes  
Caged within thy heart  
Beat their wings against it,  
Longing to depart,  
Till they shake their prison  
With their wounded cry ;  
Open wide thy heart to-day,  
And let the captives fly.

Let them first fly upward  
Through the starry air,  
Till you almost lose them,  
For their home is there ;  
Then, with outspread pinions,  
Circling round and round,  
Wing their way, wherever  
Want and woe are found.

Where the weary stitcher  
    Toils for daily bread ;  
Where the lonely watcher  
    Watches by her dead ;  
Where with thin weak fingers,  
    Toiling at the loom,  
Stand the little children,  
    Blighted ere they bloom.

Where, by darkness blinded,  
    Groping for the light,  
With distorted conscience  
    Men do wrong for right ;  
Where, in the cold shadow,  
    By smooth pleasure thrown,  
Human hearts by hundreds  
    Harden into stone.

Where on dusty highways,  
    With faint heart and slow,  
Cursing the glad sunlight,  
    Hungry outcasts go :  
Where all mirth is silenced,  
    And the hearth is chill,  
For one place is empty,  
    And one voice is still.

Some hearts will be lighter  
While your captives roam  
For their tender singing,  
Then recall them home ;  
When the sunny hours  
Into night depart,  
Softly they will nestle  
In a quiet heart.

### THE PEACE OF GOD.

WE ask for Peace, oh Lord !  
Thy children ask Thy Peace ;  
Not what the world calls rest,  
That toil and care should cease,  
That through bright sunny hours  
Calm Life should fleet away,  
And tranquil night should fade  
In smiling day ;—  
It is not for such Peace that we would pray.

We ask for Peace, oh Lord !  
Yet not to stand secure,  
Girt round with iron Pride,  
Contented to endure ;

Crushing the gentle strings  
That human hearts should know,  
Untouched by others' joy  
Or others' woe ;—  
Thou, oh dear Lord, wilt never teach us so.

We ask Thy Peace, oh Lord !  
Through storm, and fear, and strife,  
To light and guide us on,  
Through a long struggling life ;  
While no success or gain  
Shall cheer the desperate fight,  
Or nerve, what the world calls,  
Our wasted might :—  
Yet pressing through the darkness to the light.

It is Thine own, oh Lord,  
Who toil while others sleep ;  
Who sow with loving care  
What other hands shall reap :  
They lean on Thee entranced,  
In calm and perfect rest :  
Give us that Peace, oh Lord,  
Divine and blest,  
Thou keepest for those hearts who love Thee  
best.

LIFE IN DEATH AND DEATH IN  
LIFE.

I.

IF the dread day that calls thee hence,  
Through a red mist of fear should loom,  
(Closing in deadliest night and gloom  
Long hours of aching dumb suspense,)  
And leave me to my lonely doom,

I think, belovèd, I could see  
In thy dear eyes the loving light  
Glaze into vacancy and night,  
And still say, "God is good to me,  
And all that He decrees is right."

That, watching thy slow struggling breath,  
And answering each imperfect sign,  
I still could pray thy prayer and mine,  
And tell thee, dear, though this was death,  
That God was love, and love divine.

Could hold thee in my arms, and lay  
Upon my heart thy weary head,  
And meet thy last smile ere it fled ;  
Then hear, as in a dream, one say,  
“ Now all is over,—she is dead.”

Could smooth thy garments with fond care,  
And cross thy hands upon thy breast,  
And kiss thine eyelids down to rest,  
And yet say no word of despair,  
But, through my sobbing, “ It is best.”

Could stifle down the gnawing pain,  
And say, “ We still divide our life,  
She has the rest, and I the strife,  
And mine the loss, and hers the gain :  
My ill with bliss for her is rife.”

Then turn, and the old duties take—  
Alone now—yet with earnest will  
Gathering sweet sacred traces still  
To help me on, and, for thy sake,  
My heart and life and soul to fill.

I think I could check vain weak tears,  
And toil,—although the world’s great space

Held nothing but one vacant place,  
And see the dark and weary years  
Lit only by a vanished grace.

And sometimes, when the day was o'er,  
Call up the tender past again :  
Its painful joy, its happy pain,  
And live it over yet once more,  
And say, " But few more years remain."

And then, when I had striven my best,  
And all around would smiling say,  
" See how Time makes all grief decay,"  
Would lie down thankfully to rest,  
And seek thee in eternal day.

## II.

But if the day should ever rise—  
It could not and it cannot be—  
Yet, if the sun should ever see,  
Looking upon us from his skies,  
A day that took thy heart from me ;

If loving thee still more and more,  
And still so willing to be blind,  
I should the bitter knowledge find,

That Time had eaten out the core  
Of love, and left the empty rind ;

If the poor lifeless words, at last,  
(The soul gone, that was once so sweet,)  
Should cease my eager heart to cheat,  
And crumble back into the past,  
And show the whole a vain deceit ;

If I should see thee turn away,  
And know that prayer, and time, and pain,  
Could no more thy lost love regain,  
Than bid the hours of dying day  
Gleam in their mid-day noon again ;

If I should loose thy hand, and know  
That henceforth we must dwell apart,  
Since I had seen thy love depart,  
And only count the hours flow  
By the dull throbbing of my heart ;

If I should gaze and gaze in vain  
Into thine eyes so deep and clear,  
And read the truth of all my fear  
Half mixed with pity for my pain,  
And sorrow for the vanished year ;

If not to grieve thee overmuch,  
I strove to counterfeit disdain,  
And weave me a new life again,  
Which thy life could not mar, or touch,  
And so smile down my bitter pain ;

The ghost of my dead Past would rise  
And mock me, and I could not dare  
Look to a future of despair,  
Or even to the eternal skies,  
For I should still be lonely there.

All Truth, all Honour, then would seem  
Vain clouds, which the first wind blew by ;  
All Trust, a folly doomed to die ;  
All Life, a useless empty dream ;  
All Love—since thine had failed—a lie.

But see, thy tender smile has cast  
My fear away : this thought of mine  
Is treason to my Love and thine ;  
For Love is Life, and Death at last  
Crowns it eternal and divine !

## RECOLLECTIONS.

As strangers, you and I are here ;  
We both as aliens stand,  
Where once, in years gone by, I dwelt  
No stranger in the land.  
Then while you gaze on park and stream,  
Let me remain apart,  
And listen to the awakened sound  
Of voices in my heart.

Here, where upon the velvet lawn  
The cedar spreads its shade,  
And by the flower-beds all around,  
Bright roses bloom and fade ;  
Shrill merry childish laughter rings,  
And baby voices sweet,  
And by me, on the path, I hear  
The tread of little feet.

Down the dark avenue of limes,  
Whose perfume loads the air,

Whose boughs are rustling overhead,  
    (For the west wind is there,)  
I hear the sound of earnest talk,  
    Warnings and counsels wise,  
And the quick questioning that brought  
    Such gentle calm replies.

Still the light bridge hangs o'er the lake,  
    Where broad-leaved lilies lie,  
And the cool water shows again  
    The cloud that moves on high ;—  
And one voice speaks, in tones I thought  
    The past for ever kept ;  
But now I know, deep in my heart  
    Its echoes only slept.

I hear, within the shady porch,  
    Once more, the measured sound  
Of the old ballads that were read,  
    While we sat listening round ;  
The starry passion-flower still  
    Up the green trellice climbs ;  
The tendrils waving seem to keep  
    The cadence of the rhymes.

I might have striven, and striven in vain,  
Such visions to recall,  
Well known and yet forgotten ; now  
I see, I hear, them all !  
The Present pales before the Past,  
Who comes with angel wings ;  
As in a dream I stand, amidst  
Strange yet familiar things !

Enough ; so let us go, mine eyes  
Are blinded by their tears ;  
A voice speaks to my soul to-day  
Of long forgotten years.  
And yet the vision in my heart,  
In a few hours more,  
Will fade into the silent past,  
Silently as before.

## ILLUSION.

WHERE the golden corn is bending,  
And the singing reapers pass,  
Where the chestnut woods are sending  
Leafy showers upon the grass,

The blue river onward flowing  
Mingles with its noisy strife,  
The murmur of the flowers growing,  
And the hum of insect life

I, from that rich plain was gazing  
Towards the snowy mountains high,  
Who their gleaming peaks were raising  
Up against the purple sky.

And the glory of their shining,  
Bathed in clouds of rosy light,  
Set my weary spirit pining  
For a home so pure and bright !

So I left the plain, and weary,  
Fainting, yet with hope sustained,  
Toiled through pathways long and dreary  
Till the mountain top was gained.

Lo ! the height that I had taken,  
As so shining from below,  
Was a desolate, forsaken  
Region of perpetual snow.

I am faint, my feet are bleeding,  
All my feeble strength is worn,

In the plain no soul is heeding,  
I am here alone, forlorn.

Lights are shining, bells are tolling,  
In the busy vale below ;  
Near me night's black clouds are rolling,  
Gathering o'er a waste of snow.

So I watch the river winding  
Through the misty fading plain,  
Bitter are the tear-drops blinding,  
Bitter useless toil and pain—  
Bitterest of all the finding  
That my dream was false and vain !

### A VISION.

GLOOMY and black are the cypress trees,  
Drearily waileth the chill night breeze.  
The long grass waveth, the tombs are white,  
And the black clouds flit o'er the chill moonlight.  
Silent is all save the dropping rain,  
When slowly there cometh a mourning train ;

The lone churchyard is dark and dim,  
And the mourners raise a funeral hymn :

“Open, dark grave, and take her ;  
Though we have loved her so,  
Yet we must now forsake her,  
Love will no more awake her :  
(Oh, bitter woe !)  
Open thine arms and take her  
To rest below !

“Vain is our mournful weeping,  
Her gentle life is o’er ;  
Only the worm is creeping,  
Where she will soon be sleeping,  
For evermore—  
Nor joy nor love is keeping  
For her in store !”

Gloomy and black are the cypress trees,  
And drearily wave in the chill night breeze.  
The dark clouds part and the heavens are blue,  
Where the trembling stars are shining through.  
Slowly across the gleaming sky,  
A crowd of white angels are passing by.  
Like a fleet of swans they float along,

Or the silver notes of a dying song.  
Like a cloud of incense their pinions rise,  
Fading away up the purple skies.  
But hush ! for the silent glory is stirred,  
By a strain such as earth has never heard :

“ Open, oh Heaven ! we bear her,  
    This gentle maiden mild,  
Earth’s griefs we gladly spare her,  
From earthly joys we tear her,  
    Still undefiled ;  
And to thine arms we bear her,  
    Thine own, thy child.

“ Open, oh Heaven ! no morrow  
    Will see this joy o’ercast,  
No pain, no tears, no sorrow,  
Her gentle heart will borrow ;  
    Sad life is past ;  
Shielded and safe from sorrow,  
    At home at last.”

But the vision faded and all was still,  
On the purple valley and distant hill.  
No sound was there save the wailing breeze,  
The rain, and the rustling cypress trees.

## PICTURES IN THE FIRE.

WHAT is it you ask me, darling?  
All my stories, child, you know ;  
I have no strange dreams to tell you,  
Pictures I have none to show.

Tell you glorious scenes of travel?  
Nay, my child, that cannot be,  
I have seen no foreign countries,  
Marvels none on land or sea.

Yet strange sights in truth I witness,  
And I gaze until I tire ;  
Wondrous pictures, changing ever,  
As I look into the fire.

There, last night, I saw a cavern,  
Black as pitch ; within it lay  
Coiled in many folds a dragon,  
Glaring as if turned at bay.

And a knight in dismal armour  
On a wingèd eagle came,

To do battle with this dragon ;  
And his crest was all of flame.

As I gazed the dragon faded,  
And, instead, sate Pluto crowned,  
By a lake of burning fire ;  
Spirits dark were crouching round.

That was gone, and lo ! before me,  
A cathedral vast and grim ;  
I could almost hear the organ  
Peal along the arches dim.

As I watched the wreathèd pillars,  
Groves of stately palms arose,  
And a group of swarthy Indians  
Stealing on some sleeping foes.

Stay ; a cataract glancing brightly,  
Dashed and sparkled ; and beside  
Lay a broken marble monster,  
Mouth and eyes were staring wide.

Then I saw a maiden wreathing  
Starry flowers in gardens sweet ;  
Did she see the fiery serpent  
That was wrapped about her feet ?

That fell crashing all and vanished ;  
And I saw two armies close—  
I could almost hear the clarions,  
And the shouting of the foes.

They were gone ; and lo ! bright angels,  
On a barren mountain wild,  
Raised appealing arms to Heaven,  
Bearing up a little child.

And I gazed, and gazed, and slowly  
Gathered in my eyes sad tears,  
And the fiery pictures bore me  
Back through distant dreams of years.

Once again I tasted sorrow,  
With past joy was once more gay,  
Till the shade had gathered round me—  
And the fire had died away.

### THE SETTLERS.

TWO stranger youths in the Far West,  
Beneath the ancient forest trees,  
Pausing, amid their toil to rest,  
Spake of their home beyond the seas ;

Spake of the hearts that beat so warmly,  
Of the hearts they loved so well,  
In their chilly northern country.

“Would,” they cried, “some voice could tell  
Where they are, our own beloved ones !”

They looked up to the evening sky  
Half hidden by the giant branches,  
But heard no angel-voice reply.  
All silent was the quiet evening :  
Silent were the ancient trees ;  
They only heard the murmuring song  
Of the summer breeze,  
That gently played among  
The acacia trees.

And did no warning spirit answer,  
Amid the silence all around ;  
“Before the lowly village altar  
She thou lovest may be found,  
Thou, who trustest still so blindly,  
Know she stands a smiling bride !  
Forgetting thee, she turneth kindly  
To the stranger at her side.  
Yes, this day thou art forgotten,  
Forgotten, too, thy last farewell,  
All the vows that she has spoken,

And thy heart has kept so well.  
Dream no more of a starry future,  
In thy home beyond the seas !”  
But he only heard the gentle sigh  
Of the summer breeze,  
So softly passing by  
The acacia trees.

And vainly, too, the other, looking  
Smiling up through hopeful tears,  
Asked in his heart of hearts, “Where is she,  
She I love these many years ?”  
He heard no echo calling faintly :  
“Lo, she lieth cold and pale,  
And her smile so calm and saintly  
Heeds not grieving sob or wail—  
Heeds not the lilies strewn upon her,  
Pure as she is, and as white,  
Or the solemn chanting voices,  
Or the taper’s ghastly light.”  
But silent still was the ancient forest,  
Silent were the gloomy trees,  
He only heard the wailing sound  
Of the summer breeze,  
That sadly played around  
The acacia trees !

## HUSH !

" I CAN scarcely hear," she murmured,

" For my heart beats loud and fast,  
But surely in the far, far distance,  
I can hear a sound at last."

" It is only the reapers singing,  
As they carry home their sheaves,  
And the evening breeze has risen,  
And rustles the dying leaves."

" Listen ! there are voices talking."

Calmly still she strove to speak,  
Yet her voice grew faint and trembling,  
And the red flushed in her cheek.

" It is only the children playing  
Below, now their work is done,  
And they laugh that their eyes are dazzled  
By the rays of the setting sun."

Fainter grew her voice, and weaker  
As with anxious eyes she cried,

“ Down the avenue of chestnuts,  
I can hear a horseman ride.”

“ It was only the deer that were feeding  
In 'a herd on the clover grass,  
They were startled, and fled to the thicket,  
As they saw the reapers pass.”

Now the night arose in silence,  
Birds lay in their leafy nest,  
And the deer couched in the forest,  
And the children were at rest :  
There was only a sound of weeping  
From watchers around a bed,  
But Rest to the weary spirit,  
Peace to the quiet Dead !

### HOURS.

WHEN the bright stars came out last night,  
And the dew lay on the flowers,  
I had a vision of delight—  
A dream of by-gone hours.

Those hours that came and fled so fast,  
Of pleasure or of pain,  
As phantoms rose from out the past  
Before my eyes again.

With beating heart did I behold  
A train of joyous hours,  
Lit with the radiant light of old,  
And, smiling, crowned with flowers.

And some were hours of childish sorrow,  
A mimicry of pain,  
That through their tears looked for a morrow  
They knew must smile again.

Those hours of hope that longed for life,  
And wished their part begun,  
And ere the summons to the strife,  
Dreamed that the field was won.

I knew the echo of their voice,  
The starry crowns they wore ;  
The vision made my soul rejoice  
With the old thrill of yore.

I knew the perfume of their flowers ;  
The glorious shining rays  
Around these happy smiling hours  
Were lit in by-gone days.

Oh stay, I cried—bright visions, stay,  
And leave me not forlorn !  
But, smiling still, they<sup>2</sup> passed away,  
Like shadows of the morn.

One spirit still remained, and cried,  
“Thy soul shall ne’er forget !”  
He standeth ever by my side—  
The phantom called Regret !

But still the spirits rose, and there  
Were weary hours of pain,  
And anxious hours of fear and care  
Bound by an iron chain.

Dim shadows came of lonely hours,  
That shunned the light of day,  
And in the opening smile of flowers  
Saw only quick decay.

Calm hours that sought the starry skies  
For heavenly lore were there ;  
With folded hands and earnest eyes,  
I knew the hours of prayer.

Stern hours that darkened the sun's light,  
Heralds of coming woes,  
With trailing wings, before my sight  
From the dim past arose.

As each dark vision passed and spoke  
I prayed it to depart :  
At each some buried sorrow woke  
And stirred within my heart.

Until these hours of pain and care  
Lifted their tearful eyes,  
Spread their dark pinions in the air  
And passed into the skies.

## THE ' TWO INTERPRETERS.

“THE clouds are fleeting by, father,  
 Look in the shining west,  
 The great white clouds sail onward  
 Upon the sky's blue breast.  
 Look at a snowy eagle,  
 His wings are tinged with red,  
 And a giant dolphin follows him,  
 With a crown upon his head !”

The father spake no word, but watched  
 The drifting clouds roll by ;  
 He traced a misty vision too  
 Upon the shining sky :  
 A shadowy form, with well-known grace  
 Of weary love and care,  
 Above the smiling child she held,  
 Shook down her floating hair.

“The clouds are changing now, father,  
 Mountains rise higher and higher !  
 And see where red and purple ships  
 Sail in a sea of fire !”

The father pressed the little hand  
More closely in his own,  
And watched a cloud-dream in the sky  
That he could see alone :  
Bright angels carrying far away  
A white form, cold and dead,  
Two held the feet, and two bore up  
The flower-crowned, drooping head.

“ See, father, see ! a glory floods  
The sky, and all is bright,  
And clouds of every hue and shade  
Burn in the golden light.  
And now, above an azure lake,  
Rise battlements and towers,  
Where knights and ladies climb the heights,  
All bearing purple flowers.”

The father looked, and, with a pang  
Of love and strange alarm,  
Drew close the little eager child  
Within his sheltering arm ;  
From out the clouds the mother looks  
With wistful glance below,  
She seems to seek the treasure left  
On earth so long ago ;

She holds her arms out to her child,  
His cradle-song she sings :  
The last rays of the sunset gleam  
Upon her outspread wings.

Calm twilight veils the summer sky,  
The shining clouds are gone ;  
In vain the merry laughing child  
Still gaily prattles on ;  
In vain the bright stars, one by one,  
On the blue silence start,  
A dreary shadow rests to-night  
Upon the father's heart.

### COMFORT.

HAST thou o'er the clear heaven of thy soul  
Seen tempests roll ?  
Hast thou watched all the hopes thou wouldst  
have won  
Fade, one by one ?  
Wait till the clouds are past, then raise thine  
eyes  
To bluer skies.

Hast thou gone sadly through a dreary night,  
And found no light,  
No guide, no star, to cheer thee through the  
plain—

No friend, save pain ?  
Wait, and thy soul shall see, when most forlorn,  
Rise a new morn.

Hast thou beneath another's stern control  
Bent thy sad soul,  
And wasted sacred hopes and precious tears ?  
Yet calm thy fears,  
For thou canst gain, even from the bitterest  
part,  
A stronger heart.

Has Fate o'erwhelmed thee with some sudden  
blow ?

Let thy tears flow ;  
But know when storms are past, the heavens  
appear  
More pure, more clear ;  
And hope, when farthest from their shining  
rays,  
For brighter days.

Hast thou found life a cheat, and worn in vain  
Its iron chain?

Has thy soul bent beneath earth's heavy bond?  
Look thou beyond;  
If life is bitter—*there* for ever shine  
Hopes more divine.

Art thou alone, and does thy soul complain  
It lives in vain?

Not vainly does he live who can endure.  
Oh be thou sure,  
That he who hopes and suffers here, can earn  
A sure return.

Hast thou found nought within thy troubled life  
Save inward strife?

Hast thou found all she promised thee, Deceit,  
And Hope a cheat?  
Endure, and there shall dawn within thy breast  
Eternal rest!

## HOME AT LAST.

CHILD, do not fear ;  
We shall reach our home to-night,  
For the sky is clear,  
And the waters bright ;  
And the breezes have scarcely strength  
To unfold that little cloud,  
That like a shroud  
Spreads out its fleecy length ;  
Then have no fear,  
As we cleave our silver way  
Through the waters clear.

Fear not, my child !  
Though the waves are white and high,  
And the storm blows wild  
Through the gloomy sky ;  
On the edge of the western sea,  
See that line of golden light,  
Is the haven bright

Where home is awaiting thee ;  
Where, this peril past,  
We shall rest from our stormy voyage  
In peace at last.

Be not afraid ;  
But give me thy hand, and see  
How the waves have made  
A cradle for thee.  
Night is come, dear, and we shall rest ;  
So turn from the angry skies,  
And close thine eyes,  
And lay thy head on my breast :  
Child, do not weep ;  
In the calm, cold, purple depths  
There we shall sleep.

### UNEXPRESSED.

DWELLS within the soul of every Artist  
More than all his effort can express ;  
And he knows the best remains unuttered ;  
Sighing at what *we* call his success.

Vainly he may strive ; he dare not tell us  
All the sacred mysteries of the skies :  
Vainly he may strive ; the deepest beauty  
Cannot be unveiled to mortal eyes.

And the more devoutly that he listens,  
And the holier message that is sent,  
Still the more his soul must struggle vainly,  
Bowed beneath a noble discontent.

No great Thinker ever lived and taught you  
All the wonder that his soul received ;  
No true Painter ever set on canvas  
All the glorious vision he conceived.

No Musician ever held your spirit  
Charmed and bound in his melodious chains,  
But be sure he heard, and strove to render,  
Feeble echoes of celestial strains.

No real Poet ever wove in numbers  
All his dream ; but the diviner part,  
Hidden from all the world, spake to him only  
In the voiceless silence of his heart.

So with Love : for Love and Art united  
Are twin mysteries ; different, yet the same :  
Poor indeed would be the love of any  
Who could find its full and perfect name.

Love may strive, but vain is the endeavour  
All its boundless riches to unfold ;  
Still its tenderest, truest secret lingers  
Ever in its deepest depths untold.

Things of Time have voices : speak and perish.  
Art and Love speak—but their words must be  
Like sighings of illimitable forests,  
And waves of an unfathomable sea.

### BECAUSE.

It is not because your heart is mine—mine only—  
Mine alone ;  
It is not because you chose me, weak and lonely,  
For your own ;

Not because the earth is fairer, and the skies  
    Spread above you  
Are more radiant for the shining of your eyes—  
    That I love you !

It is not because the world's perplexèd meaning  
    Grows more clear ;  
And the parapets of Heaven, with angels leaning,  
    Seem more near ;  
And Nature sings of praise with all her voices  
    Since yours spoke,  
Since within my silent heart, that now rejoices,  
    Love awoke !

Nay, not even because your hand holds heart  
    and life ;  
    At your will  
Soothing, hushing all its discord, making strife  
    Calm and still ;  
Teaching Trust to fold her wings, nor ever roam  
    From her nest ;  
Teaching Love that her securest, safest home  
    Must be Rest.

But because this human Love, though true and  
    sweet—  
    Yours and mine—

Has been sent by Love more tender, more  
complete,  
More divine ;  
That it leads our hearts to rest at last in Heaven,  
Far above you ;  
Do I take you as a gift that God has given—  
—And I love you !

### REST AT EVENING.

WHEN the weariness of Life is ended,  
And the task of our long day is done,  
And the props, on which our hearts depended,  
All have failed or broken, one by one ;  
Evening and our Sorrow's shadow blended  
Telling us that peace is now begun.

How far back will seem the sun's first dawning,  
And those early mists so cold and grey !  
Half forgotten even the toil of morning,  
And the heat and burthen of the day :  
Flowers that we were tending, and weeds scorning,  
All alike withered and cast away.

Vain will seem the impatient heart, which waited  
Toils that gathered but too quickly round ;  
And the childish joy, so soon elated  
At the path we thought none else had found ;  
And the foolish ardour, soon abated  
By the storm which cast us to the ground.

Vain those pauses on the road, each seeming  
As our final home and resting-place ;  
And the leaving them, while tears were streaming  
Of eternal sorrow down our face ;  
And the hands we held, fond folly dreaming  
That no future could their touch efface.

All will then be faded :—night will borrow  
Stars of light to crown our perfect rest ;  
And the dim vague memory of faint sorrow  
Just remain to show us all was best,  
Then melt into a divine to-morrow :—  
Oh, how poor a day to be so blest !

## 'A RETROSPECT.

FROM this fair point of present bliss,  
 Where we together stand,  
 Let me look back once more and trace  
 That long and desert land,  
 Wherein till now was cast my lot, and I could live,  
 and thou wert not.

Strange that my heart could beat, and know  
 Alternate joy and pain,  
 That suns could roll from east to west,  
 And clouds could pass in rain,  
 And the slow hours without thee fleet, nor stay  
 their noiseless silver feet.

What had I then? a Hope, that grew  
 Each hour more bright and dear,  
 The flush upon the eastern skies  
 That showed the sun was near :—  
 Now night has faded far away, my sun has risen,  
 and it is day.

A dim Ideal of tender grace  
In my soul reigned supreme ;  
Too noble and too sweet I thought  
To live, save in a dream—  
Within thy heart to-day it lies, and looks on me  
from thy dear eyes.

Some gentle spirit—Love I thought—  
Built many a shrine of pain ;  
Though each false Idol fell to dust,  
The worship was not vain,  
But a faint radiant shadow cast back from our  
Love upon the Past.

And Grief, too, held her vigil there ;  
With unrelenting sway  
Breaking my cloudy visions down,  
Throwing my flowers away :—  
I owe to her fond care alone that I may now be  
all thine own.

Fair Joy was there—her fluttering wings  
At times she strove to raise ;  
Watching through long and patient nights,  
Listening long eager days :  
I know now that her heart and mine were waiting,  
Love, to welcome thine.

Thus I can read thy name throughout,  
And, now her task is done,  
Can see that even that faded Past  
Was thine, belovèd one,  
And so rejoice my Life may be all consecrated,  
dear, to thee.

### TRUE OR FALSE.

So you think you love me, do you?  
Well, it may be so ;  
But there are many ways of loving  
I have learnt to know.  
Many ways, and but one true way,  
Which is very rare ;  
And the counterfeits look brightest,  
Though they will not wear.

Yet they ring, almost, quite truly,  
Last (with care) for long ;  
But in time must break, may shiver  
At a touch of wrong :

Having seen what looked most real  
Crumble into dust ;  
Now I chose that test and trial  
Should precede my trust.

I have seen a love demanding  
Time and hope and tears,  
Chaining all the past, exacting  
Bonds from future years ;  
Mind and heart, and joy and sorrow,  
Claiming as its fee :  
That was Love of Self, and never,  
Never Love of me !

I have seen a love forgetting  
All above, beyond,  
Linking every dream and fancy  
In a sweeter bond ;  
Counting every hour worthless,  
Which was cold or free :—  
That, perhaps, was—Love of Pleasure,  
But not Love of me !

I have seen a love whose patience  
Never turned aside,  
Full of tender, fond devices ;  
Constant, even when tried ;

Smallest boons were held as victories,  
Drops that swelled the sea :  
That I think was—Love of Power,  
But not Love of me !

I have seen a love disdain  
Ease and pride and fame,  
Burning even its own white pinions  
Just to feed its flame ;  
Reigning thus, supreme, triumphant,  
By the soul's decree ;  
That was—Love of Love, I fancy,  
But not Love of me !

I have heard—or dreamt, it may be—  
What Love is when true ;  
How to test and how to try it,  
Is the gift of few :  
These few say (or did I dream it ?)  
That true Love abides  
In these very things, but always  
Has a soul besides.

Lives among the false loves, knowing  
Just their peace and strife :  
Bears the self-same look, but always  
Has an inner life.

Only a true heart can find it,  
True as it is true,  
Only eyes as clear and tender  
Look it through and through.

If it dies, it will not perish  
By Time's slow decay,  
True Love only grows (they tell me)  
Stronger, day by day :  
Pain—has been its friend and comrade ;  
Fate—it can defy ;  
Only by its own sword, sometimes  
Love can choose to die.

And its grave shall be more noble  
And more sacred still,  
Than a throne, where one less worthy  
Reigns and rules at will.  
Tell me then, do you dare offer  
This true Love to me? . . .  
Neither you nor I can answer ;  
We will—wait and see !

## GOLDEN WORDS.

SOME words are played on golden strings,  
 Which I so highly rate,  
 I cannot bear for meaner things  
 Their sound to desecrate.

For every day they are not meet,  
 Or for a careless tone ;  
 They are for rarest, and most sweet,  
 And noblest use alone.

One word is POET : which is flung  
 So carelessly away,  
 When such as you and I have sung,  
 We hear it, day by day.

Men pay it for a tender phrase  
 Set in a cadenced rhyme :  
 I keep it as a crown of praise  
 To crown the kings of time.

And LOVE : the slightest feelings, stirred  
By trivial fancy, seek  
Expression in that golden word  
They tarnish while they speak.

Nay, let the heart's slow, rare decree,  
That word in reverence keep ;  
Silence herself should only be  
More sacred and more deep.

FOR EVER : men have grown at length  
To use that word, to raise  
Some feeble protest into strength,  
Or turn some tender phrase.

It should be said in awe and fear  
By true heart and strong will,  
And burn more brightly year by year,  
A starry witness still.

HONOUR : all trifling hearts are fond  
Of that divine appeal,  
And men, upon the slightest bond,  
Set it as slighter seal.

That word should meet a noble foe  
Upon a noble field,  
And echo—like a deadly blow  
Turned by a silver shield.

Trust me, the worth of words is such  
They guard all noble things,  
And that this rash irreverent touch  
Has jarred some golden strings.

For what the lips have lightly said,  
The heart will lightly hold,  
And things on which we daily tread  
Are lightly bought and sold.

The sun of every day will bleach  
The costliest purple hue,  
And so our common daily speech  
Discolours what was true.

But as you keep some thoughts apart  
In sacred honoured care,  
If in the silence of your heart,  
Their utterance too be rare ;

Then, while a thousand words repeat  
Unmeaning clamours all,  
Melodious golden echoes sweet  
Shall answer when you call.

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